



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
January 15 - 22, 2016

Table of Contents

The following news stories are divided into the following sections.

Aboriginal Arts & Culture	2
Aboriginal Business & Finance	18
Aboriginal Community Development	27
Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement	67
Aboriginal Education & Youth	73
Aboriginal Health	83
Aboriginal History	96
Aboriginal Identity & Representation	98
Aboriginal Jobs & Labour	109
Aboriginal Politics	112
Aboriginal Sports	119
Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources	122
Land Claims & Treaty Rights	141
Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women	157
Special Topic: Residential Schools, TRC, & '60s Scoop	168
Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations	176

Aboriginal Arts & Culture

New dictionary documents rare Inuit dialect

"It preserves the dialect in a way that it's never been preserved"

SARAH ROGERS, January 15, 2016 - 11:55 am



Nunavut's education minister Paul Quassa, Nunavut Arctic College's Sean Guistini and Nunavut linguist Conor Cook show off the new Utkuhiksalingmiut dictionary at the legislative assembly last October. Cook co-authored the book with anthropologist Jean Briggs and U of Toronto linguist Alana Johns. (PHOTO BY ERIC CORNEAU/NAC)



Jean Briggs, left, pictured here in 2002 on a return visit to Gjoa Haven, was adopted by Rosie Kigeak, right, in the early 1960s to ease her transition into Utku lifestyle. Kigeak, who recently passed away, became Briggs' most trusted collaborator on the dictionary of the Utku dialect. (FILE PHOTO)

The language once spoken by the Utkuhiksalingmiut, like many Inuktitut dialects, has faded out of use over the last few decades, and is now only spoken by a small group of elders.

But a new dictionary published late last year preserves much of the Utkuhiksalingmiut dialect in a new 700-page book.

The Utkuhiksalingmiut are a group of Inuit who once lived in an area of the central Arctic, along the northern border that divides today's Kivalliq and Kitikmeot regions of Nunavut around the Back River.

As those Inuit settled into communities such as Gjoa Haven and Baker Lake, the language blended with other dialects from the interior, and with Netsilik and coastal Hudson Bay dialects.

Now you can learn more about the Utkuhiksalik dialect in *Utkuhiksalingmiut Uqauhiitigut: Dictionary of Utkuhiksalingmiut Inuktitut Postbase Suffixes*, which was recently published by Nunavut Arctic College.

This dictionary includes the many suffixes used to form words in Inuktitut; some terms require as many as six “post bases,” or chunks.

The material was all gathered by Memorial University anthropologist Jean Briggs, whose work in the central Arctic spans more than five decades.

In the 1960s, Briggs spent a year and a half living as the adopted daughter of an Utkuhiksalingmiut family at a camp in Chantrey Inlet. Her work there led to her famous book, *Never in Anger*, published in 1971.

Although her purpose there was to observe social and emotional relationships among Inuit, learning the language was part of her daily study.

Her adoptive family did that by “acting out the words,” or showing examples, Briggs said.

For English speakers, Briggs provides an example of the complexity of the language: *qaurimangngilaarunnaqtuq* translates as “they might faint.”

She breaks down the word: *qauri* (to be conscious) + *ma* (state of being) + *ngngit* (not) + *laaq* (there is a possibility that) + *runnaq* (might) + *tuq* (third person singular participle.) Ngngit is the most common of all negatives in Inuktitut, she added.

Over time, Briggs became fluent in the language, and even after her time living among the Utkuhiksalingmiut, she frequently returned to the region until the 1990s (you can read an interview with Briggs from 2002 in Nunatsiaq News [here](#).)

During that time, of course, many of the Utkuhiksalingmiut who camped along the Back River had settled in either Gjoa Haven or Baker Lake.

“And so the few people who actually spoke Utkuhiksalingmiutitut from Chantrey Inlet, their speech got mixed up with other peoples’ speech,” Briggs said in a telephone interview.

“Nothing is the same as the language that any of them grew up with. It’s not that the dialect has changed, but they’ve all mixed.”

The Utkuhiksalangmiut dictionary is based on 600 hours of recordings made by Briggs during her visits to the region.

On the urging of some of her linguist friends, including the book's co-author, Alana Johns of the University of Toronto, Briggs, now 86, decided to go through the language recordings.

Another of the book's co-authors, Iqaluit-based linguist Conor Cook, processed the hours of word definitions.

"[But] a lot of credit needs to go to the knowledge and work that was put into this project by the speakers of Utkuhiksalik dialect who worked with Jean," said Cook, naming the late Rosie Kigeak in Gjoa Haven, her sisters Katie Kamimmalik and Salomie Qitsualik, as well as Joedee Joedee in Baker Lake.

"In the process of organizing the dictionary entries, I got to see (mostly through Jean's notes) a lot of the very detailed and precise explanations and discussions by these speakers about what exactly a word meant and what context it could be used in," Cook said.

"A lot of the material in this dictionary is really a testament to a strong scholarly tradition within Inuit culture of precise language use and of talking about language, and I really hope that tradition is preserved."

After the dictionary was published last October, Nunavut's education minister Paul Quassa stood up in the legislative assembly to announce its publication.

Quassa then gave a copy to his fellow cabinet ministers and MLAs.

"I encourage both northern and southern readers to continue preserving and promoting Inuit culture through our language and the joys of reading," he told the legislature.

It's not clear how and where the dictionary will be used, giving the rarity of the dialect.

When Briggs last visited Gjoa Haven to show residents the dictionary, their response was "Oh, that's what you were doing all those years," she recalled, laughing.

"But it preserves the dialect in a way that it's never been preserved," said Briggs. "There is no written text."

Utkuhiksalangmiut Uqauhiitigut: Dictionary of Utkuhiksalangmiut Inuktitut Postbase Suffixes is available for sale at Arctic Ventures Marketplace in Iqaluit, and on online at amazon.ca.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674new_dictionary_documents_rare_inuit_dialect/

Dana Claxton wants to change the way you think about indigenous women

The Vancouver-based artist explores images of indigenous women in new exhibition

Leah Collins · CBC Arts January 14, 2016



A still from *Uplifting*, a digital video by Dana Claxton appearing in *Made to Be Ready*, the artist's new exhibition at Vancouver's Audain Gallery. (Dana Claxton)

"When people think of indigenous women, what do they see? What's the stereotype?" It's a question [Dana Claxton](#) often asks her students at the University of British Columbia, where the multi-disciplinary visual artist is an associate professor in the department of art history, visual art and theory.

"I'll tell them I don't want to know the answer, you just think about what yours is," Claxton tells CBC Arts.

Since the early '90s, Claxton has encouraged people well beyond her classroom to consider these ideas through her practice in film, video, photography and performance art, work that's part of collections including the Vancouver Art Gallery and the National Gallery of Canada.



Baby Girlz Gotta Mustang, a lightjet C-print photograph by Dana Claxton. From Mustang Suite. (Dana Claxton/Winsor Gallery)

Claxton hails from Saskatchewan's Lakota First Nations-Wood Mountain reserve, and is now based in Vancouver. Through her art, she explores themes of beauty and representation, especially as related to indigenous people. *Made to Be Ready*, her latest exhibition — appearing at [Vancouver's Audain Gallery to March 12](#) — follows the themes of much of her oeuvre, whether that means the playful *Indian Candy*, which took over billboards in seven Canadian cities as part of the 2014 Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival, or *The Mustang Suite*, vibrant portraits that merge western and indigenous aesthetics with a touch of irony.

"Indigenous people have been structurally dehumanized in all facets of life in North America, whether it's through education, through the state, through the church," says Claxton. "In some ways, my work has attempted to show us as human beings."



Dana Claxton. Headdress, 2015, LED firebox with transmounted Lightjet Duratrans. (Dana Claxton)

Headdress

A [Victoria Secret model](#) wears a fringed bikini and feathered headdress. DSquared dubs a new collection "[DSquaw](#)." It's 2016, but headlines about cultural appropriation on the

catwalk keep coming. A major topic of discussion and controversy, Claxton's *Made to Be Ready* addresses the issue — in one photo especially, called *Headdress*.

"You're not going to see any Indian wearing those things, but you see all those faux hippies at Coachella wearing them, right?" says Claxton.

"It's insulting. But I understand why. They're beautiful. They feel amazing on. They're comforting. They have manna. They're gorgeous. They're amazing head gear, but they mean something, especially to Plains Indian people. So coming from a culture that has been oppressed and structurally dehumanized, the things that are ours, we cherish them."



One of a series of billboards put up in Saskatoon by Vancouver-based artist Dana Claxton as part of Indian Candy. The series appeared in seven Canadian cities as part of the 2014 Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival. (Trevor Pritchard/CBC Saskatoon)

"Personally, I find it to be insensitive, and kind of silly, really. Maybe even stupid, because people don't know the history, still," she says.

In *Headdress*, Claxton uses her personal collection of jewellery and beads and strings them together to form a rainbow veil that adorns the face of the model. When she wears the same beads in her day-to-day life, albeit styled a little more conventionally, Claxton says she experiences something unusual. "It's interesting. Sometimes when you wear your beadwork, people will reach out and touch you," she says. "I've never reached out to touch someone's pearls or emeralds, but why [do] people think when we're adorned with our stuff they can reach out and touch us? It's an interesting phenomenon."



Dana Claxton. *Buffalo Woman 1 and 2*, 2015, Ink on silk windbox. (Dana Claxton)

'What is Indigenous beauty?'

"What do I see when I see Indigenous women? I see profound beauty in all kinds of ways," says Claxton, a vision that's reflected in her work, which mixes Lakota tradition with western influences. "It's a mash-up going on. My work's a mash-up — the ancient with what's going on now," she explains.

Take a look at *Buffalo Woman 1 and 2*, photographs appearing in *Made to Be Ready*. The model, who has appeared in several of Claxton's images over the last 25 years, raises a crystalline buffalo skull with her muscular arms, looking to the light, and bowing her head in reverence. She evokes strength, spiritual humility — but she's also all glamour, literally dazzling thanks to the sparkle and flash of her sapphire gown, just dripping with beads.

"I do see the photos as glamorous," says Claxton, "but I think of them more within the realm of gorgeousness. And beauty."

"Beauty's such a loaded word, because it's attached to judgement, and aesthetics and all that kind of stuff. I'm not using beauty in any Western, Greek sense," she laughs. "I'm using it in terms of, 'What is indigenous beauty? What is THE indigenous gorgeous?'"

"There's all kinds of beauty that circulates out there, so how do we see it? What's the stereotype?"



Dana Claxton. *Cultural Belongings*, 2015, LED firebox with transmounted Lightjet Duratrans. (Dana Claxton)

The origin of the series

"Beauty" is a loaded word, and so is "art." In English, anyway. As Claxton explains, "in indigenous languages there isn't a word for art. [...] I think that's what [*Made to Be Ready*] is partially about, this idea that there's been this question for so long — there's no word for art in our language."

In 2014, Claxton contributed a short to *Rising Voices/ Hóthānīpi*, an American film project about the Lakota language revitalization movement. "The origins of [*Made to Be Ready*] were there," she says. "As part of that project I made these new works, thinking about Lakota language retention and also our Lakota cultural belongings. What is a Lakota aesthetic?"

It's an element that embellishes the images in *Made to Be Ready*, for one. A woman carries a Lakota horse dance stick in the photograph *Cultural Belongings*. "She is moving forward, going into a light, and she has an enormous history that's with her as she continues to move," says Claxton, noting the subject's other personal effects: shields, drums, parfleche bags.

"These things are adorned, they have aesthetic properties," says Claxton. But they're also made to be used — or 'Made to Be Ready,' as the case may be. The title of the exhibition is, Claxton explains, a bit of a play on words. "I love the *readymade*," she says, "Duchamp's intervention into the whole idea of what art is was so significant." And similarly, this show seeks to challenge how we think about art, especially as it relates to the rattles or masks or beadwork depicted in Claxton's photographs, works usually labelled craft, not fine art.

"[*Made to Be Ready*] is really just thinking about those cultural belongings and how they fit within the world."

Dana Claxton. To March 12 at Audain Gallery, Vancouver. www.sfu.ca/galleries

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/beta/arts/dana-claxton-wants-to-change-the-way-you-think-about-indigenous-women-1.3403600>

Cree mythology written in the stars

Sunday January 17, 2016



Kids call him the star guy.

That's because Wilfred Buck has been revealing the universe to awestruck students for eight years as a science specialist with the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre in Winnipeg.

But Buck, who is from Opaskwayak Cree Nation, doesn't teach them about Orion or the North Star. Instead, he tells them about the Cree constellations, like Wesakaychak and Keewatin.

"[As a kid] I never heard no other stories about the stars except Roman, Greek mythology, implying that they were the only ones who understood about the stars," he explained.

"When I talked to the elders they told me, 'Everybody on our half of the world went outside at night and looked at the stars. Therefore, every culture in our half of the world understood about the sky because they lived under that sky.'"

In collaboration with the Manitoba Museum Planetarium, Buck has travelled to many First Nations with a mobile dome. He projects the stars onto it to teach students about the universe through an indigenous lens.



Wilfred Buck is a science educator who teaches First Nations students about Cree, Lakota and Anishinaabe stories of the constellations. (Jaison Empsom/CBC)

"I carry around the universe with me," Buck laughed, talking about his portable sky. "I can adjust the latitude and longitude to anywhere I am. So I can go anywhere in the world."

He said when the education resource centre approached him about the job, they told him that his mandate was to to put the First Nations perspective into science.

But there was a problem.

"I went to ceremony, into a sweat lodge and passed tobacco and asked some of the old people what process would I need to look at in order to do what I was supposed to do," he recalled. "They said it would be very difficult to do what I was asked to do."

Instead, they told him to put science into First Nations perspective. One of the obvious ways to accomplish that was through atchakosuk, or the stars.

"The knowledge of the First Nations people, the Ininewuk [Cree] people, Lakota people, Anishinaabe [Ojibway] people, they been there for thousands and thousands of years."

Buck said he began gathering stories from from Cree, Ojibway and Lakota nations and found many similarities in how indigenous peoples saw the sky and their connection to it.

"We originate from the stars, we are star people," Buck said. "The genesis mythologies say this is where we come from. We come from those stars, we are related to those stars. Once we finish doing what we come here to do, we go back up to those stars."

What most people know as the North Star has several names in Cree. It is sometimes called Keewatin, which means Going Home Star, or Ekakatchet Atchakos, which translates to English as It stands Still.



Wilfred Buck takes his portable planetarium to First Nations communities. (MRNERC)

There are various legends about what is commonly called Orion's Belt. As Buck explained, the Cree call that group of stars Wesakaychak, a trickster figure in Cree mythology.

"This is a winter constellation," he said. "When Wesakaychak is up in the sky, that is when we tell the stories to the youth."

Buck said many First Nations kids are hearing these stories for the first time and it gives them a sense of connection to their culture and to science.

"They are seeing their own culture right before their eyes that they were never told about," he said.

"They have to know they are connected to the universe and they also have to know that their people knew just as much about the stars as anyone else."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/from-star-wars-to-stargazing-1.3402216/cree-mythology-written-in-the-stars-1.3402227>

'I lost my talk': Prolific Mi'kmaq poet honoured in Ottawa symphony



CTVNews.ca Staff

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A trailblazing Mi'kmaq poet known for writing "I Lost My Talk," a simple yet heartbreaking glimpse at the cultural genocide suffered by First Nations people, is being honoured in an elaborate musical production.

Rita Joe is one of Canada's most prolific First Nations poets, and the National Arts Centre hopes to introduce new audiences to the late writer's powerful prose in their most expensive musical production ever.

"This idea of losing voice, of losing identity, is actually a universal theme," National Arts Centre music director Alexander Shelley told CTV News.



Rita Joe is one of Canada's most prolific First Nations poets, and the National Arts Centre hopes to introduce new audiences to the late writer's powerful prose in their most expensive musical production ever.



Rita Joe's daughter, Ann Joe, says her mother called the residential school system 'a prison.'



The new musical production was commissioned for former prime minister Joe Clark's 75th birthday.

Originally from England, Shelley came up with the idea for "I Lost My Talk" – a multimedia experience that includes video storytelling, a narrator and a live orchestra – after learning about Joe's story while researching online.

As a young orphan girl growing up in Nova Scotia, Joe was sent to a residential school.

"She said it was kind of like being in prison," said Joe's daughter, Ann Joe.

Joe got through the experience by writing poems, but she had to keep them secret from the school's nuns. When her poetry was discovered, she would be ridiculed.

"The nun yelled at her, 'Where did you get this?' And my mother, she pointed to her head and her heart," Ann Joe said.

Despite the criticism, Joe didn't stop writing. She went on to become one of the most influential First Nations writers of her generation. She received numerous honours throughout her lifetime and became a member of both the Order of Canada and the Queen's Privy Council for Canada.

The immersive multimedia production, which features a film and choreographed dancing, has been described as an exploration of "exile, resistance and displacement. It was commissioned for former prime minister Joe Clark's 75th birthday. Clark has been considered a champion for First Nations issues and was recently named an honorary witness for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Clark told CTV News that he was struck by the poem's simplicity "and how few words it takes to tell a really basic truth."

With a report from CTV's Omar Sachedina

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/entertainment/i-lost-my-talk-prolific-mi-kmaq-poet-honoured-in-ottawa-symphony-1.2739905>

BWW Review: Inuit Throat Singer Tanya Tagaq Reclaims The False Images of NANOOK OF THE NORTH

January 19, 2016

There are times when a theatre piece goes beyond what is physically presented on the stage and the concept and intentions of the artists involved are so powerful that a complete understanding of the performance isn't necessary to hold you emotionally. Such is the case when Inuit throat singer Tanya Tagaq creates a soundscape that reclaims nearly 100-year-old images on behalf of those who came before her.

Like D.W. Griffith's 1915 silent epic THE BIRTH OF A NATION, Robert J. Flaherty's 1922 silent documentary NANOOK OF THE NORTH is considered both a landmark work of filmmaking and an embarrassing display of early 20th Century racism.

A prospector by trade, Flaherty got the idea to extensively film the Inuit people of northern Quebec while exploring the area for the Canadian Pacific Railway. The footage he shot from 1914-15 was almost completely destroyed by a fire caused by a cigarette, so, after raising the money to return and reshoot, he arrived again in 1920.

This time his aim was to add a narrative by focusing on a year in the life of the hunter Allakariallak, who he renamed Nanook, and his wife, who was played by a woman who wasn't his wife.

With titles that described the Inuit people as simple, kind and happy-go-lucky, the director staged scenes like a visit to a white merchant's trading post where Nanook displays a child-like fascination with a gramophone, and a walrus hunt where the men used harpoons instead of their usual rifles.

Tagaq's performance, as part of the Public Theater's Under The Radar Festival, begins with the singer describing her embarrassment when she first saw the film, bringing back familiar feelings of being regarded as "the other." This improvised performance, which she premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2012 is a response to an attitude that regulates indigenous cultures to being museum pieces. "But I am still here, a modern Eskimo," she demands.

As the full film is played above her, the vocalist is joined by musicians [Jean Martin](#) (drums), Jesse Zubot (violin) and Jeffrey Zeigler (cello). Laptop computers give them a view of the movie, but you may get the sense that Tagaq can feel the entire drama embedded within her.

Throat singing requires a vocalist to produce a primary tone and simultaneously sing one or more overtones. Tagaq counts electronica, industrial and metal among her additional influences and the sounds and rhythms she voices are evocatively abstract interpretations of the film's environment and actions. She sings no discernible words but her writhing body and unpredictable vocals thrillingly mix the political and the spiritual.

The question of displaying art that was heralded in its time, and may have significant creative value, but contains qualities that offend contemporary sensibilities, often produce heated debate. In this case, Tanya Tagaq provides a fascinating context that makes viewing NANOOK OF THE NORTH a more enlightening experience.

Direct Link: <http://www.broadwayworld.com/article/BWW-Review-Inuit-Throat-Singer-Tanya-Tagaq-Reclaims-The-False-Images-of-NANOOK-OF-THE-NORTH-20160119>

The Haida's tale: Margaret Atwood helps bring Native American literature to the UK

Robert Bringhurst's translations of Haida stories in *A Story as Sharp as a Knife* are published in the UK for the first time, thanks to the Booker winner's championing of this 'book of wonders'



Margaret Atwood: 'Out of the forest he came, carrying this book of wonders.' Photograph: Amit Lennon for the Guardian

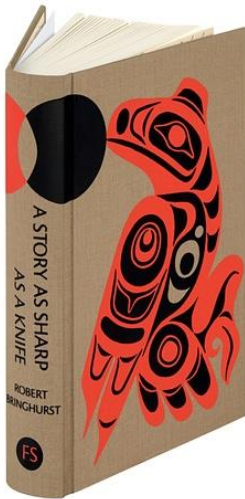
Alison Flood

Wednesday 20 January 2016

A book which preserves in print the almost lost oral literature of the Native American Haida people has been published in the UK for the first time, thanks to its championing by the Canadian Booker prize winner Margaret Atwood, who calls *A Story as Sharp as a Knife* is a "book of wonders".

In 1901, the linguist and ethnographer John Swanton travelled to an archipelago off the coast of British Columbia and Alaska, known as Haida Gwaii. He listened to the last two great Haida poets, Ghandl and Skaay, at a time when their people had almost died out, and an interpreter helped him write down phonic transcriptions and a rough translation of what he believed were folk tales.

Almost 100 years later, the Canadian poet Robert Bringhurst came across Swanton's work in a library, taught himself Haida, and set about a new translation, hoping to bring the work to a wider audience. Bringhurst believes that the Haida oral literature was poetry, although a poetry which used neither rhyme nor metre. He published *A Story as Sharp as a Knife*, the first part of his trilogy *Masterworks of the Classical Haida Mythtellers*, in the US and Canada in 1999. But the award-winning work had never made it to the UK – until Atwood convinced boutique publisher the Folio Society to take a look.



A Story as Sharp as a Knife – translations of the oral literature of the Haida by the poet Robert Bringhurst – is published by the Folio Society with illustrations by the Haida artist Don Yeomans and an introduction by Margaret Atwood. Photograph: Folio Society

“Margaret Atwood directed us to it,” says Johanna Geary, managing editor at the Folio Society, which has just released the first UK edition of the book, with illustrations by Haida artist Don Yeomans, for £80. “We’d published an edition of *The Handmaid’s Tale*, and she’d mentioned it to us as something we should look at publishing. She is such a champion of this book, and Bringhurst.”

“It’s one of those books which not many people know about, but those who do, want to tell everyone about it,” said Geary. “On the face of it, it does seem like a very local story, about Haida-speaking storytellers in a small part of Canada; their way of life and culture. It does seem very specific. But it’s a way to look at how this mythology fits into a wider world of literature, and it’s incredible.”

Atwood has written an introduction for the new edition in which she describes Bringhurst as: “A kind of genius ... the perfect Prince Charming to come across John Swanton’s neglected Haida oral poetry transcriptions, and to hack his way – with help – through the thicket of brambles surrounding them.”

“He needed to teach himself Haida, a language which he still claims not to speak (though he could fool just about everyone on that score, since there are only a handful of truly

fluent speakers alive). He then needed to discover the structural principles of the epics he was translating: not easy, since Haida (like Japanese) does not use rhyme as a structuring principle, nor does it use metrical feet in the way that English and French do,” writes Atwood.

Bringhurst also learned the iconography of the Haida. Others, says Atwood: “would have been daunted by the challenge, [but] into the dark forest he plunged; and then, after battles we can only begin to imagine, out of the forest he came, carrying this book of wonders.” It is a work, Atwood writes, that “opens locked doors ... reveals vistas ... illuminates”. It shows that oral poems are not “the product of some anonymous ‘mass’ [but the] creations of individuals working within their cultures”.

Atwood quotes Bringhurst, who writes of one of Ghandl’s performances: “It is a work of music built from silent images, sounding down the years. It is a vision painted indelibly in the air with words that disappear the moment they are spoken.”

Ghandl’s spoken poetry, Bringhurst adds, “is both familiar and one of a kind. It is something new and locally flavoured, fulfilling age-old, independently recurrent and widely travelled themes. And it is part of a whole forest of themes and variations, echoes and allusions, spreading out through space and time. It is one piece of work; it is also part of a fabric that is torn and patched, woven and unwoven day after day, night after night, and sentence after sentence, like the cloth on Penelope’s loom.”

Direct Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/jan/20/margaret-atwood-haida-robert-bringhurst-story-sharp-as-knife-folio-society>

Aboriginal Business & Finance

Aboriginal businesses can thrive if we provide the right incentives

ISADORE DAY

Contributed to The Globe and Mail

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Aboriginal issues are frequently in the headlines these days with the new government’s stated commitments to help First Nation communities, as well as deliver on recommendations made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

As the regional chief of Ontario, I realize that meeting basic human rights such as clean water, health and education is just the beginning of a long journey towards securing our rightful place in Canada. Quality of life investments are critical and long overdue. However, economic investments must also be a top priority. Once our Peoples are able to overcome poverty and despair, we must focus on building healthy, prosperous

communities. First Nations must work with the business sector and all levels of government in order to fully participate in the Canadian economy.

While there continues to be a downturn in the mineral and oil sectors, there are enormous opportunities for First Nations to partner and own green energy projects, as well as all the related spin-off businesses that supply the energy sector. If Canada is to burn less carbon and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30 per cent over the next 15 years, then our Peoples are the natural partners to deliver on those lofty goals.

One great example of how First Nations can begin right now to participate in the economy is the work being done by the Canadian Council on Aboriginal Business and OMX in order to help Canadian aboriginal-owned businesses access contracts from government contractors bidding on work for the federal government. In Canada, we have the Industrial and Technological Benefits Policy (ITB), which promotes Canadian industrial activities in government procurements. According to OMX president Nicole Verkindt, this policy has done a fantastic job of including Canadian companies in supply chains of major government contractors, as well as promoting investment into Canadian technologies and small businesses and bringing them into global value chains.

So when we talk about the aboriginal community and aboriginal-owned businesses, there are a lot of ways to support them. Provide the right incentives to take risks, leverage investments with tax credits or provide grants. However, providing the incentives for procurement contracts to promote aboriginal-owned businesses is good for the economy, good for jobs and good for all small businesses, particularly aboriginal-owned businesses.

By working together – First Nations, governments, business and industry – we will build a strong, prosperous Canada for all.

Isadore Day is the regional Chief for Ontario.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/small-business/sb-growth/aboriginal-businesses-can-thrive-if-we-provide-the-right-incentives/article28150242/>

The sleeping dog of contraband cigarettes

BY [MARK BONOKOSKI](#), POSTMEDIA NETWORK

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Deb's Restaurant

SHANNONVILLE, Ont. – So here we are, in Deb's Restaurant, cigarettes burning away in the ashtrays, waiting for one of the blue-plate specials to come off the grill.

It is not a time warp. We are in the early days of 2016, and not 2006 when smoking was about to be banned in all public places in this province.

Just a few clicks down the road, in the central Ontario city of Belleville, a Mac's Milk is selling a large pack of 25 Player's cigarettes for \$14, all taxes in, as legal as legal can be.

At the variety store attached to Deb's, however, a plastic bag of 200 illegal cigarettes can be purchased for all of \$12, and without a penny of tax.

But we are not in Belleville anymore when sitting in Deb's Restaurant. No, that city's road sign disappeared in the rear-view mirror a few minutes back.

We're now in Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, 7,250-hectares of First Nations reserve on Lake Ontario's Bay of Quinte, where sales of illegal cigarettes, and their link to organized crime, are as common as birds on a wire.

There are "smoke shacks" everywhere, a dozen or more, one of them run by Shawn Brant, a well-established jail guest for years of aboriginal activism that included convictions for blocking trains on their scheduled Toronto-Montreal runs, which is easy

enough when CN's main rail line virtually goes through your reserve, and you want to make sure your concerns get noticed on national aboriginal action days.

Brant, who I have written about often, was not behind the counter of his Two Hawks smoke shack on this particular day, but a carton of Putter's, a knockoff of tax-packed Player's, was selling in his shop for \$35, which was about 50 cents cheaper than anywhere else on the rez.

It was also a damn sight cheaper than the \$110-plus at any convenience store outside of Tyendinaga, or the Curve Lake First Nations near Peterborough, Ont., when the Ojibwa have their own smoke-shop enterprises.

And politicians wonder why Native-produced cigarettes are cutting deeply into the legitimate cigarette trade which, because they are a "sin" like booze, are taxed so heavily-handedly that the average working stiff with a nicotine addiction sees merit in buying contraband.

Let's see now. Do I want to pay \$14 for 25 cigarettes at the Mac's where the majority of the retail price is taxes, or do I want to pay \$12 for 200 tax-free cigarettes at Two Hawks?

Of course, the Ontario Liberal government of Kathleen Wynne is mightily upset about the loss of taxation revenues because of illegal cigarettes and, in 2011, introduced a bill called the Supporting Smoke-Free Ontario By Reducing Contraband Tobacco Act, and then promised to invest \$34 million a year on contraband enforcement.

Two years earlier, the National Coalition Against Contraband Tobacco claimed the 30% of cigarette butts found outside 110 Ontario schools were smokes that had originated on reserves, meaning our kids were getting hooked on the cheap stuff because it was, well, cheaper.

At the same time, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation gave a conservative estimate that, in Ontario alone, the loss in federal and provincial tax revenues due to contraband cigarettes amounted to more than \$1.1 billion a year.

So why has the much-ballyhooed enforcement legislation failed so dismally? And why has there been no full-bore in-your-face spot-check program for "contraband enforcement" set up by the Ontario Provincial Police on the few roads in-and-out of most Ontario reserves?

It is fear of retaliation, of course, and/or the fear of the political backlash of waking the sleeping dog.

This will never be publicly admitted by anyone in authority, of course, but the lack of political will should never be underestimated when it comes to dealing with any potentially explosive First Nations issue.

Recent history has shown this to be true in various circumstances in Oka, Ipperwash and Caledonia.

Why should contraband cigarettes be any different?

Direct Link: <http://www.torontosun.com/2016/01/16/the-sleeping-dog-of-contraband-cigarettes>

Manitoba First Nation seeks government support in bid for rail line, port

**The purchase is about more than just profits said Mathias Colomb
Cree Nation chief Arlen Dumas**

CBC News Posted: Jan 15, 2016 12:35 PM CT Last Updated: Jan 15, 2016 10:08 PM CT



A northern Manitoba First Nation says it wants government support in its bid to buy a rail line and the Port of Churchill, but it's not releasing details.

Mathias Colomb Cree Nation's chief, Arlen Dumas, said negotiations are ongoing, and he is confident his community has what's needed to run both.

The community and Denver-based OmniTrax announced in early January they have entered into sale negotiations involving the Hudson Bay rail line and the Port of Churchill.

Keewatin Railway Company, another First Nations-run rail line, will help Mathias Colomb make the purchase Dumas said, but he is also asking for help from the provincial and federal governments, noting both have a responsibility to help First Nations succeed.

Although Dumas said he is not in a position to say how much money he is asking for, the purchase is about more than just profits.

"Our main focus is the people," Dumas said on Friday.

"I want to make sure that the people in War Lake and the people in Split Lake and the people in Gillam ... have access to the railway ... How do we make sure they're able to transport goods?"

Buying the rail line and the port will add up to more economic opportunities for people in northern Manitoba, said Dumas, and Merv Tweed, president of OmniTrax, said he has always believed local ownership was the key to success.

For some remote communities, the rail line is the only way to access the rest of Manitoba.

There is no word on when the sale will be final.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-first-nation-seeks-government-support-in-bid-for-rail-line-port-1.3405883>

Inuit org negotiates improved IIBA for Meliadine

Kivalliq Inuit benefits deal contains improved Inuit contracting, financial compensation provisions

SARAH ROGERS, January 19, 2016 - 10:55 am



KIA president David Ningeongan, left, receives a \$1.5 million cheque from Agnico Eagle Mines Ltd. chair Jim Nasso this past July 13. That payment is the first under the Inuit org's IIBA for the Meliadine gold project, which provides them with improved contracting and financial compensation measures. (PHOTO COURTESY OF AEM)

The Kivalliq Inuit Association says the Inuit Impact Benefit Agreement for the region's Meliadine gold project is a step up from past agreements in what it offers Inuit.

After more than three years of negotiations, the KIA and Agnico Eagle Mines Ltd. completed and signed an IIBA last July for the company's Meliadine gold project.

“The Meliadine IIBA provides for improved contracting opportunities for Inuit firms, improved employment opportunities, and enhanced provisions for social and cultural benefits,” KIA president David Ningeongan said in an email to *Nunatsiaq News* last week.

“The KIA is also taking an active role in its implementation of the IIBA through the committees created by the IIBA, all of which improve on the provisions found in the Meadowbank IIBA.”

If Agnico Eagle decides to go ahead with it, Meliadine, located about 26 kilometres north of Rankin Inlet, would become its second gold mine in the Kivalliq region.

The IIBA, a copy of which has been obtained by *Nunatsiaq News*, is still to be translated into Inuktitut, but a 138-page English version highlights the mining company’s various commitments on Inuit employment, goods and service contracts, and resource royalties.

Inuit employment and contracting

In negotiations, talks between the Inuit association and the mining company sometimes hit a roadblock around issues like financial compensation and preference points for Inuit contractors.

At one point in 2014, when talks reached an apparent impasse, Agnico Eagle asked the federal government to provide compulsory binding arbitration.

However, the completed IIBA awards points to Inuit firms recognized under Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. based on how much of the contract they’ll fulfill, their percentage of Inuit employees and their local presence, with the highest scores going to affected Kivalliq communities.

The IIBA says Agnico Eagle must make its “best efforts” to award contracts to Inuit firms, providing at least 11 months notice prior to the expected construction or operation date.

An employment and culture committee will set annual goals on the required number of Inuit to be employed in selected trades and job categories.

The IIBA also commits Agnico Eagle to work towards a minimum rate of 50 per cent Inuit employment.

Along with that commitment, the mining company must develop work readiness and training programs, as well as promote women employees into non-traditional roles.

To help reach those goals at Meliadine and the company’s other Nunavut mine, Meadowbank, Agnico Eagle will pay out at least \$750,000 each year on initiatives designed to help it meet 50 per cent Inuit employment.

Royalties

Agnico Eagle will pay the KIA what's called Net Smelter Returns, or a royalty of 1.2 per cent of the net revenue it receives through the sale of the mine's metals.

The KIA even has the option of receiving those payments as refined gold.

With the signing of the IIBA last July, Agnico Eagle said it made its first payment of \$1.5 million to the KIA.

AEM will now be required to pay out a \$500,000 payment following the issuance of a Type B pre-development water license, issued by the Nunavut Water Board, along with another \$1 million payment following the receipt of its Type A water license.

Throughout the life of the mine, Agnico Eagle has responsibilities towards wildlife around the mine site.

The company must pay compensation for animals that are relocated or killed due to mining activity, from \$2,500 per caribou to \$500,000 for a bowhead whale.

Some other provisions of the agreement:

- Agnico Eagle must hold information sessions in the surrounding Kivalliq communities at least once each year to keep residents up to date on the project;
- Agnico Eagle will seek out and apply Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit in all decision-making affecting its Meliadine project in assessing and monitoring impacts and mitigation measures;
- Agnico Eagle will allow Inuit access to the lands and waters on the Meliadine property to engage in traditional activities, although Inuit are not permitted to discharge firearms within a radius of one mile of a building, structure or facility;
- The agreement doesn't prevent Agnico Eagle from ceasing operations at Meliadine but obligates the company to notify the KIA and work towards a post-operation phase at least 18 months before the scheduled shut down.

We tried to reach representatives from the KIA to ask what they are doing with the money which the association has already received from Agnico Eagle, and the royalties they stand to earn as well. The KIA did not respond to our requests.

The Nunavut Impact Review Board issued Meliadine its project certificate earlier this year, subject to 127 terms and conditions.

Agnico Eagle has said the mine could produce 400,000 ounces of gold per year over a 13-year lifespan and the company hopes to run the mine from about 2018 to 2030, and possibly longer.

But in fact, the company has yet to make a final decision to build a mine there. Agnico Eagle said it plans to take the project to its board of directors some time this year.

You can [read the rest of the agreement here](#).

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674inuit_org_negotiates_improved_iiba_for_meliadine/

Deninu Kue First Nation takes fight for benefits to new Indigenous Affairs minister

Wants compensation for not having IBAs with first 3 diamond mines unlike other Akaitcho First Nations

CBC News Posted: Jan 19, 2016 7:34 AM CT Last Updated: Jan 19, 2016 8:26 AM CT



Deninu Kue First Nation Chief Louis Balsillie has sent a letter to new Indigenous Affairs minister Carolyn Bennett, following up on letters sent to her predecessor Bernard Valcourt about the First Nation's right to IBAs with the first three N.W.T. diamond mines.

The Deninu Kue First Nation hopes the new federal government will do more to help get it benefits from the Northwest Territories' diamond mines.

The First Nation is based in Fort Resolution on Akaitcho Territory. Unlike the two other Akaitcho First Nations — the Yellowknives Dene and Lutselk'e — Deninu Kue was excluded from impact benefit agreements (IBAs) with the owners of the

Ekati, Diavik and Snap Lake diamond mines because its settlement is on the south side of Great Slave Lake.

"What they're saying is we're on the south shore of the lake and all the mining's on the north shore, but ... we're still negotiating for lands, so we should be part of all IBAs that were given to the other [Akaithcho] First Nations," said Deninu Kue Chief Louis Balsillie.

"We are part of Akaithcho."

The DKFN sent letters in 2014 and 2015 to the previous Aboriginal Affairs minister Bernard Valcourt asking to discuss the matter, but Balsillie says it never got a response.

Now he's hoping the new minister, Carolyn Bennett, will accept the invitation to meet with the band.

Balsillie says the First Nation is looking for compensation for losing out on the jobs and business opportunities IBAs bring. He wouldn't specify an amount.

The Deninu Kue First Nation **signed an IBA with the Gahcho Kue diamond mine** in 2014 after proving its traditional activities extend to that region. It also has IBAs with the Avalon Nechalacho project and Tamerlane's Pine Point project.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/deninu-kue-diamond-mine-ibas-1.3409567>

Aboriginal Community Development

16 Indigenous movers and shakers to watch in 2016

National News | January 14, 2016 by Brandi Morin



Brandi Morin

APTN National News

It takes a lot of people to make the world go around. Some people are putting their best foot forward to make sure it moves in the right direction. 2016 promises to be a big year for First Nation, Métis Nation and Inuit peoples across the country.

APTN National News created a list of Indigenous movers and shakers that we predict will be doing big things in the coming year. Here is the list of exceptional up and comers in alphabetical order:

Althea Guiboche-Activist

Althea Guiboche, aka the Bannock Lady, feeds the homeless in Winnipeg and has become a well-known advocate for the struggles they face. The feisty, driven, single mother of seven, currently lives on income support but is breaking stereotypical views about those who receive welfare.



Althea Guiboche

She uses the influence gained by her charity work to speak out against racism and other issues related to First Nations.



Guiboche (centre) at an event in the north end of Winnipeg.

Now, she has her sights set on the Manitoba legislature. In December Guiboche announced her bid to run as the Liberal candidate in her neighbourhood of Point Douglas in inner city Winnipeg. Whether or not she wins, we expect to see a lot more from Guiboche going forward.

Ashley Callingbull-Mrs. Universe

Callingbull made international news headlines after winning the Mrs. Universe title in Belarus last August, the first Canadian and First Nations woman to ever claim the crown. The stunning Enoch Cree Nation model and actress used the sudden notoriety to give voice to the plight of First Nations in Canada and called for the ousting of then Prime Minister Stephen Harper.



Ashley Callingbull

Soon after, Callingbull joined David Suzuki and other celebrities to launch the Leap Manifesto to urge citizens and governments alike to care for the climate and transition away from fossil fuels. She also raises awareness about missing and murdered Indigenous women, poverty, inequality and racism.



Callingbull with the Butterflies in Spirit performers after the Fashion Speaks event to raise awareness about MMIW in B.C. last fall.

While gracing the cover of countless fashion magazines and travelling the world, Callingbull keeps a hectic schedule of public appearances and media engagements.

Cara Currie-Hall-Political Activist

One of the co-founders of Rock the Indigenous Vote stormed onto the Canadian political activism scene just weeks prior to the 2015 federal election.

Currie-Hall, originally from Montana Cree Nation in Maskwacis, Alta., and now living in North Dakota, helped, in her own way, in getting Barack Obama elected as President by helping to create a block vote throughout Indian Country in the United States.



Cara Currie-Hall

She took her passion and expertise back home this past fall and toured the prairies urging Canada's Indigenous Peoples to get out and Rock the Indigenous vote. She called Canada's Indigenous community a "force to be reckoned with" and the strategy was to "Indigenize" the election to make the political parties "talk to us, on our terms."

On the heels of a Liberal majority elected to government last October Currie Hall continues to stay engaged with the Canadian political scene.

Her efforts have impressed Indigenous leaders enough to appoint her to sit on the International Oversight Committee on Treaty Enforcement and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples committee.



Currie-Hall (left) with Justin Trudeau during the 2015 federal election

Look for this powerhouse of a Nehiyaw woman to continue taking over the country in the name of Indigenous rights in the year to come.

Cory Nicotine-Activist

Winner of the prestigious, 2015 Everyday Political Citizen award by Toronto based organization Samara Canada, Cory Nicotine.

Nicotine, originally from Saddlelake Cree Nation in northern Alberta is a passionate advocate for youth.



Cory Nicotine. Photo: Brandi Morin/APTN

During a trip to Africa in 2012 Nicotine said he was intrigued after witnessing a mesh of cultural and religious backgrounds living harmoniously. Meanwhile back at home, the Idle No More movement was exploding across Canada.

These events sparked the inspiration for Nicotine to establish Knowledge is Pow Wow. The program, run out of the iHuman Youth Society in Edmonton helps create

understanding and breaks down barriers in Edmonton's diverse, multi-cultural community while encouraging youth to become engaged with politics. The city recently recognized Nicotine for his work and committed to funding Knowledge is Pow Wow in 2016.

Cowboy Smithx-Actor, director

At the age of just 34 Cowboy Smithx juggles the roles of actor, director and creator/curator of the newly launched Redx Talks speaker series.

Birthered from the desire to share the stories of the ancestors, Smithx who is Blackfoot from Piikani and Kainai in Southern Alberta, is embarking on a journey of “dispelling myths, transferring culture and dropping knowledge bombs.”



Cowboy Smithx

Following the release of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its recommendations, Smithx is hoping to build bridges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Redx Talks launched last October, bringing in top Indigenous influencers with plans to take the show on tour across Turtle Island.



Smithx is also promoting his film *Elder in the Making* inspired by the work of the Making Treaty 7 Cultural Society-a group of artists, musicians, playwrights, elders and technicians working to bring the stories of Aboriginal and settler relationships to the mainstream.

Keep on the lookout for a Redx Talks event or a screening of *Elder in the Making* to come to a city near you in 2016.

Christi Belcourt-Artist

Christi is a Metis artist originally from Lac Ste. Anne Alberta, but now lives near the shores of Lake Huron, ON. Her work has been popping up on the runways of the international fashion scene since the Valentino empire partnered with Belcourt in their 2016 Resort collection.



Artist Christi Belcourt

The couture fashion pieces feature stunning, flowery, elegant patterns based upon Belcourts 'Water Song' painting found in the National Gallery of Canada.

Belcourt uses her art to create awareness on social issues which flows into her advocacy work with missing and murdered Indigenous Women. She is involved with the Walking With Our Sisters travelling exhibit and says the fashion designs help to portray women in a broader light.



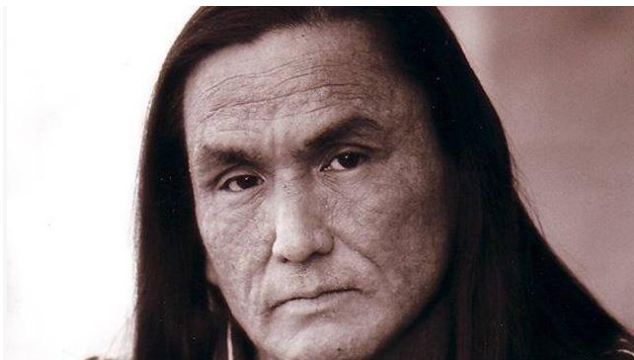
Water Song by Christi Belcourt

Celebrities like Jennifer Lopez and up and coming Yellowknife actress of *The Revenant*, Melaw Nakehk'o have been spotted wearing Belcourt's designs.

Expect to see more of the influence from this gifted artist in main stream trends in the months to come.

Duane Howard-Actor

If you're planning to watch one of the hottest movies to come out of Hollywood as of late, keep an eye out for Chief Elk Dog in *The Revenant*. He's played by Vancouver based First Nations actor Duane Howard who portrays the stoic leader of the Arikara tribe alongside Leonardo Dicaprio and Tom Hardy.



Duane Howard

Some of the backdrop scenery in *The Revenant* runs in Howard's blood who originally hails from the Nuuchahnulth territory in British Columbia which means "along the mountains and sea."

Howard's story of triumph over struggle is remarkable. After growing up in an alcoholic family, he hit the streets of Vancouver to wrestle with the demons from his childhood and eventually found solace through acting. Starting as a stuntman in *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, *Goodnight for Justice*, *Queen of Hearts* and *Artic Air*.



Howard at the premiere of *The Revenant* in California

Since landing his biggest role yet in *The Revenant*, Howard has walked the red carpet in tinsel town with the biggest names in the industry.

Many industry professionals are predicting *The Revenant* to clean house at the upcoming Oscar awards. With this type of colossal exposure we predict there are also big things brewing for Howard in the coming year.

Grace Dove-Actress

She is only in her early twenties, but her acting career has been greatly boosted thanks to *The Revenant*.

With a name as pretty as it connotes, Grace Dove impressed *Revenant* director Alejandro Inarritu enough with her artistic talents that he cast her as Leonardo DiCaprio's wife. Dove said the experience was a dream come true.



Grace Dove

The Vancouver based First Nations actress had a whirlwind of a year in 2015. She travelled across Turtle Island to film in Argentina the epic scenes opposite DiCaprio, to recently attend the movie premiere in Hollywood, all the while balancing her APTN sports action show *Under Exposed*.



Dove (right) and Leonardo DiCaprio in a scene from The Revenant

On her sudden shot to international fame and with a bright 2016 on the horizon Dove had this to say via her Instagram account:

“Coming from Prince George, being First Nations, and Canadian everyone is so impressed. I just think I had the vision and this dream and I didn’t let anyone tell me it’s not possible.”

Jody Wilson-Raybould-Politician

She is currently one of the most powerful politicians in Canada. Jody Wilson-Raybould, the Kwakwaka’wakw Liberal Member of Parliament is the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada.

From Vancouver, BC Wilson-Raybould is no new comer to the world of politics. She is the former regional chief of the B.C. Assembly of First Nations, Crown prosecutor and advocate for Indigenous rights.



Wilson-Raybould being sworn in as Minister of Justice and the Attorney General of Canada at Rideau Hall in November

Working alongside Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Wilson-Raybould will play an integral role in reconciliation initiatives and the establishment of a national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women.

Politics runs in her family. Wilson-Raybould's father Bill Wilson helped fight for Aboriginal reform in Canada's constitution.

This is the first time a First Nations person has held the title of Justice Minister in Canada and Wilson-Raybould will be carving out her mark in the nation's political history in 2016.

Marilyn Jensen- Dance troupe manager, teacher of First Nation governance

Marilyn Jensen is Inland Tlingit and Tagish Khwáan from the Carcross/Tagish First Nation; belonging to the Dakhl'aweidí Clan under the Tagish Keét Hít (Killer whale House) Killer whale crest in the Southern Yukon Territory.



Marilyn Jensen

Jensen is leading a revival in North West coastal traditions, ceremony, dance and songs. She is the founder, manager and dance group leader of the Dakhká Khwáan Dancers who have performed across Turtle Island with the goal of sharing traditional Indigenous culture with the world.

Jensen is passionate about her work to sustain her Indigenous roots teaching First Nation Governance to students, Indigenous and government organizations throughout the Yukon Territory.



The Dakhká Khwáan Dancers that Jensen manages

She is also the vice-president of the Yukon First Nation Cultural Tourism Association and a member of the Indigenous Programs Council for The Banff Centre.

Expect big things from Jensen who is pursuing a Ph'd in Indigenous leadership in 2016.

Mike Scott- Motivational Speaker

Mike Scott has a social media following in the thousands. He is a First Nations motivational speaker from Saskatoon, Sask., who is using his story of adversity to inspire youth from across the country. Leaving behind a life of addictions, Scott began a journey of healing and started the Sober is Sexi motto.



Mike Scott

For the past four years, Scott has traveled across Canada and the U.S. sharing his story and encouraging youth to find their purpose and to live a life of sobriety.

He also creates and posts hilarious video skits on social media, one of the most recent being a parody of the romantic pottery scene from the movie Ghost. The video, shared thousands of times boasting over a million views is giving wide exposure to the charismatic, down to earth and genuinely “neechie” personality that is Mike Scott.



Scott tours schools talking about the advantages of sobriety

He is a hit among native youth and old alike and his rising popularity is sure to open the doors to further opportunities in 2016.

Melina Laboucan-Massimo-Environmental Activist

Laboucan-Massimo is a First Nations environmentalist who is no stranger to the activism scene. For several years, Laboucan-Massimo has been at the forefront of environmental causes and her work continues to stand out. She is a climate and energy campaigner with Green Peace Canada and her endeavours often have the backing of Hollywood celebrities.



Laboucan-Massimo addressing a Congressional hearing in Washington, 2012

In the summer of 2015, Laboucan-Massimo lead the construction and installation of a solar power panel project in her tiny home community of Little Buffalo in northern Alberta.

Little Buffalo sits near the heart of the Alberta tar sands and has experienced devastation to its lands from oil spills.

The solar project was significant considering it cost thousands of dollars, the majority of which was raised through private donors and fundraising initiatives undertaken by Laboucan-Massimo.

Additionally, Laboucan-Massimo is an advocate for missing and murdered Indigenous women. Her own sister Bella Laboucan-Mclean died mysteriously after falling from a condo balcony in Toronto in the summer of 2013.



Laboucan-Massimo (centre) with actors Jane Fonda (left) and Rachel McAdams at a Greenpeace event in BC

Laboucan-Massimo completed her Master of Indigenous governance in December 2015 and is ready to incorporate her training with her environmental work.

She is reaching out to First Nations communities to help create renewable energy solutions and supporting Indigenous initiatives to transition to renewables in 2016.

Perry Bellegarde-National Chief, Assembly of First Nations

Just over a year into leading the Assembly of First Nations, Perry Bellegarde is at the forefront of talks of establishing a new relationship with First Nations and the newly elected Liberal government.

Bellegarde has the unprecedented task of working alongside the Trudeau government to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, conduct a national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women, carry out the 94 recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and solve the clean drinking water crisis being among the top priorities of both governments.



Bellegarde (at the podium) introduces Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at the AFN's Special Chief's Assembly in Dec. 2015

Bellegarde is keeping pressure on Trudeau to hold true to his commitments to First Nations and is expecting to see big investments announced in the upcoming federal budget.

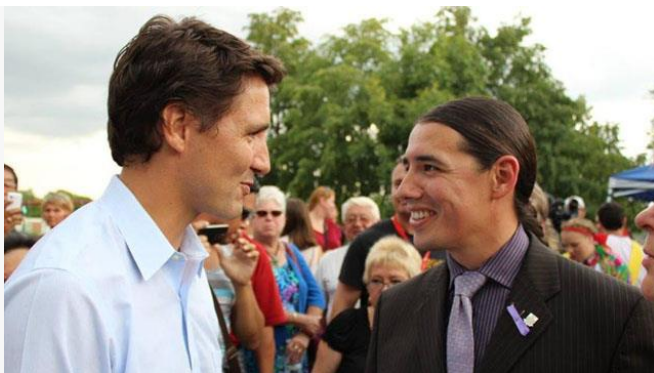


Bellegarde (back left) with the Canadian delegation to the Paris climate talks in Nov. 2015

First Nations Perry Bellegarde is at the forefront of “closing the gap” between First Nations and the Canadian government.

Robert-Falcon Ouellette-Politician

The 38 year old Metis was elected as the Liberal Minister of Parliament for Winnipeg Centre in October. Robert Falcon-Ouellette had first gained national recognition during his run for mayor of Winnipeg in 2014, which he ended up coming in third. It was considered an impressive feat given he was a newcomer to the political arena.



Falcon Ouellette campaign with Justin Trudeau in Winnipeg

He is a married father of five, has a PhD as well as two masters degrees and served for 19 years in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Falcon-Ouellette channels a magnetic personality through to his new leadership role in the House of Commons.

He is often seen wearing flowered embroidery and beaded attire to proudly express his Cree heritage.



Falcon Ouellette on the campaign trail in Winnipeg Centre

Since taking office Falcon-Ouellette has brought Indigenous issues to the forefront and called them one of the most important issues on his agenda to tackle in 2016.

Sheila North-Wilson-Grand Chief, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak

She is the first woman to ever be elected to lead the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO). Chief Sheila North-Wilson beat out incumbent David Harper with promises of ushering in big changes and reinstating integrity to the organization that represents 30 First Nations.



Sheila North Wilson

The married, mother of two has big aspirations to make her mark during her tenure as MKO grand chief.

Originally from the Bunibonibee Cree Nation North-Wilson is accustomed to the lime light. A former spokesperson for the Manitoba Assembly of First Nations and former journalist with CTV Winnipeg, she has temporarily put her TV career on hold.

Chatelaine magazine recently named North-Wilson as one of its 30 women of the year.

She is often at the center of media headlines speaking out about various First Nations issues like missing and murdered Indigenous women, child welfare and, most recently, publicly denouncing racism after being followed under suspicion of theft in a Winnipeg department store.



With a national inquiry into MMIW underway and the Trudeau government's ambitious goals to build new relationships with Indigenous peoples, North-Wilson has her work cut out for her.

Yet 2016 could be the year that sees her leadership skills take full form.

Tanya Tagaq-Artist

The Polaris prize winner from Cambridge Bay, Nunavut has been touring the world showcasing her unique talents and giving exposure to the culture of the people of the north.

Tagaq, a throat singer, a traditional way of expressing song that her ancestors have practiced for time immemorial, is much more than that.



Tanya Tagaq

She is an activist, determined to expose hard truths about systemic racism in governments, missing and murdered Indigenous women and proudly supporting the practices and preservation of her culture such as seal hunting.

Her bold, fierce approach spills out into her artistry that has garnered her praise for a one of a kind talent that channels the spirit of her Indigenous roots into the attention of main stream audiences.



Watch for Tagaq to continue breaking new ground and challenging music industry boundaries in 2016.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2016/01/14/16-indigenous-movers-and-shakers-to-watch-in-2016/>

Ice road delays put strain on First Nations



CTV Winnipeg

Published Saturday, January 16, 2016 4:24PM CST

Last Updated Saturday, January 16, 2016 5:41PM CST

Northern First Nations say the lack of ice roads after a delayed start to winter is putting a strain on their communities.

The chief of Bunibonibee First Nation, commonly known as Oxford House, said it's expensive to fly essential goods in without winter roads.

It costs about \$6,000 to charter a plane from Winnipeg.



Chief Timothy Muskego of Bunibonibee First Nation says it's expensive to fly essential goods in without winter roads.

Roads near the First Nation are starting to be prepped for an ice road, but Chief Timothy Muskego said they still won't be ready for another week or two.

"And also the cost of food, essentially foods like milk and bread, can become very costly to fly them in," he said.

The community is working to build an all-season road, but that will take several years to complete.

Earlier this month, First Nations raised concerns about warm weather and climate change affecting the vital roads.

Direct Link: <http://winnipeg.ctvnews.ca/ice-road-delays-put-strain-on-first-nations-1.2740249>

Chief Robert Joseph, residential school survivor, to receive social justice award

'We start today. We start with every little step,' says hereditary chief of the Gwawaenuk First Nation

By The Early Edition, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 17, 2016 6:00 AM PT Last Updated: Jan 17, 2016 6:00 AM PT



Chief Robert Joseph from the Gwawaenuk First Nation will receive an award from the Wallenberg Sugihara Civil Courage Society on Sunday for his work toward reconciliation for Canada's aboriginal people. (Reconciliation Canada)

Reconciliation starts with small moments and little steps toward mutual respect, says [Reconciliation Canada](#) co-founder, Chief Robert Joseph.

Joseph is one of approximately 150,000 First Nations children who suffered years of abuse, isolation and trauma in Canada's residential schools. He is also the hereditary chief of the Gwawaenuk First Nation.

"True reconciliation, fundamentally, is about relationships. It means that you and I can coexist in mutual respect and all of us can afford each other dignity," he said.

"Then we work on those issues that divide us. Sometimes it's attitudinal racism, sometimes it's economics, sometimes it's social."

Joseph is receiving an award from the [Wallenberg Sugihara Civil Courage Society](#) Sunday for his work.

The award is given to an individual who has stood up against social injustice at significant personal risk.

'It's really hard to shake the trauma'

Joseph, an honorary witness at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, says he spoke out about his experience in residential school because many Canadians still don't understand the impact it had on him and his peers.

"It's really hard to shake the trauma that resulted from that experience ... from time to time, I revert back to the broken person who's harmed very deeply," he said.

"It influences how you see the world around you, how you behave and how you act."

He describes the challenges he faces everyday.

"I have to work very hard to try and be my best self, to live out my life in the way that I have respect for everybody and everything around me."

Truth and Reconciliation report

Joseph says he had mixed feelings about the **Truth and Reconciliation report** when it was released last month.

"I do love this country. And after my own euphoria about having somebody that acknowledged ... us, little children in schools, I had to think about what does that mean to a country that's been told it affected genocide — cultural genocide."

But he says the report is a start because it provides leaders with a framework for discussion and ultimately, reconciliation, he said.

"I think that ultimately, if we're going to mitigate all the harm that's ever been done, that it's got to come about because we've had a real dialogue with each other and transformed our understanding and relationships with each other."

When people tell him reconciliation is a long ways away, Joseph says he tells them to be optimistic and proactive.

"We start today. We start with every little step," he said. "If we start right now, and this moment is a moment of reconciliation for some of us, it's a huge, huge achievement."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/chief-robert-joseph-residential-school-survivor-to-receive-social-justice-award-1.3406266>

Bodies of 3 people killed in northern Manitoba fire on the way home

Bunibonibee Cree Nation, 950 km northeast of Winnipeg, grieving loss of 3 people killed in fire

By Alana Cole, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 15, 2016 3:25 PM CT Last Updated: Jan 15, 2016 8:15 PM CT



Friends and family of three people killed in a house fire on a remote northern community last month were in Winnipeg to bring the remains of the victims home.

Bunibonibee Cree Nation Chief Timothy Muskego said funerals for the three adults are expected to take place on Monday.

"It was awful, it was terribly awful because I just can't imagine how the family felt," said Muskego.

Emergency crews were called to the wood home in the community, formally known as Oxford House, on Dec. 29.

Community members identified the victims as James Crane, his son Jamie Crane, and the family's cousin, Jastidee Sinclair.

The Manitoba Office of the Fire Commissioner said it was determined the fire was accidental and started near a wood stove.

Muskego said to the best of his knowledge, this is the first time a fire in the community has been fatal.

"It was very, very, very devastating to everybody in the community," he said.

Following the fire, Muskego told CBC News there is no water main or hydrants near the location where the fire started. That meant trucks were needed to haul water to the pumper truck to fight the flames.

He said this is a reminder of the need to continue advocating for more fire protection in all First Nations communities.

"In the past we have been talking to the federal government about the situation and we will continue to do so," said Muskego. "That will be my top priority.... It's a lot of work and I am determined to take that responsibility."

Bunibonibee Cree Nation is the home reserve of Grand Chief Sheila North Wilson, who represents northern First Nations as the head of Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO).

North Wilson has been lobbying for more fire protection on First Nations.

"When we finally lay the [people] to rest, we are going to have to look at that seriously and see where the gaps are and see where we need to do more in the community and identify the areas that are lacking," said North Wilson.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/bodies-of-3-people-killed-in-northern-manitoba-fire-on-the-way-home-1.3406313>

Art is the Medicine at Edmonton speaker series

BY CATHERINE GRIWKOWSKY, EDMONTON SUN

FIRST POSTED: SATURDAY, JANUARY 16, 2016 03:50 PM MST |

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Photo of REDx team and speakers from the inaugural REDx Talks: What I Know Now, in Calgary (October 10, 2015) PHOTO SUPPLIED

The Edmonton installment of the REDx Talks will showcase indigenous speakers as part of the Rubaboo Arts Festival.

REDx Talks (Resilience, empowerment, discourse), modelled after the popular TED (technology, entertainment, design) talks, with the theme of Art is the Medicine will make its Treaty 6 debut on Feb. 3 at La Cite Francophone.

Talks will explore treaties between Indigenous and settler cultures, and will share world views.

Rio Mitchell, creative and executive producer of REDx Talk, said the event was started to be a “knowledge bundle.”

“It’s completely based off of the indigenous spirit of oral tradition,” Mitchell said. “We’re growing a big community of influential elders and thinkers and agents of change on indigenous and conciliation issues.”

Mitchell said so far the talks have got an exceptional reception, starting with the inaugural talk in October in Calgary.

The “Art is Medicine” came up as a subconscious theme in that first talk.

“Indigenous cultures have such an incredible legacy of expression through art, so doing a REDx Talk about art and the healing power of art makes total sense,” Mitchell said.

The event will showcase seven speakers, musical performances, question and answer sessions, and food from chef Shane Chartrand.

Speakers include Grand Chief of Treaty 6, Chief Tony Alexis; award-winning Canadian chef and TV-personality, Shane Chartrand; Stephanie Harpe; Hollywood actor Cody Lightning; and multidisciplinary Métis artist Moe Clark.

The event is put on by the Iniistsî Treaty Arts Society.

“Iniistsi is the Blackfoot word for ‘treaty’, but the spirit and intent of the word holds a deeper meaning of peace, trust and new beginnings,” says Cowboy Smithx; curator of REDx Talks.

Tickets are \$40, \$55 and \$75 and are available at www.redxtalks.org or at La Cite Francophone’s box office.

Mitchell said they are planning future talks in Vancouver, Montreal and San Francisco and are hoping to create a network to talk about what is indigenous all around the world.

“We’re at a time worldwide where we pushed a lot of our colonial engines to the brink and a return to the traditional frequencies of the land is something we – all of us no matter colour, race, creed or what hockey team you cheer for – can take something from that,” she said.

Seven speakers at REDx Edmonton:

Grand Chief Tony Alexis, Leader of Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation, and Grand Chief of Treaty 6.

Chef Shane Chartrand, Featured on CHOPPED Canada and Cook It Raw, Shane is an award-winning Chef of Indigenous inspired menus, which respect and celebrate his Enoch Cree Nation roots.

Dawn Marie Marchand, is a Cree and Metis Artist of the Cold Lake First Nation. Dawn Marie works with urban youth through art integration.

Cody Lightning, Originally from Maskwacis, Lightning grew up in Hollywood and is an award-winning actor, featured in films including Geronimo, Smoke Signals, The Brave, Dreamkeeper, and Chasing the Light.

Christine Sokaymoh Frederick, is artistic director and co-founder of Alberta Aboriginal Performing Arts, producer of the Rubaboo Arts Festival, and CEO of the Dreamspeakers Film Festival Society.

Moe Clark - Multidisciplinary artist and looping pedal mistress.

Stephanie Harpe - Celebrated musician, actress, casting director, and MMIW advocate following her mother's murder in 1999.

Direct Link: <http://www.edmontonsun.com/2016/01/16/art-is-the-medicine-at-edmonton-speaker-series>

Man, 59, dies in fire at Tsawout First Nation

CINDY E. HARNETT / TIMES COLONIST
JANUARY 15, 2016 09:04 AM



Central Saanich firefighters battle a blaze in a mobile home at Popeye's Campground in on Tsawout First Nation land on the morning of Jan. 15, 2016. Photograph By James Younger

A 59-year-old man died in a fire Thursday night at the Tsawout First Nation.

Neighbour James Younger identified the man as Dave Scott.

The man, the lone resident of the mobile home at 7591 Jimmy Rd. at Popeye's Campground, died in the fire, said Central Saanich Fire Chief Ron French.

"It's tragic," French said.

"David Scott was a long time resident here at Popeye's Campground," said Carole Boomer, who said she has known Scott since he moved here about 15 years ago.

"Many here considered him a friend. People will always remember him as a champion of the underdog."

Boomer said Scott's family came from out of province this Christmas to visit him as they did most Christmases. "They are coming back this weekend to deal with the loss of their brother."

Scott was a caring person who looked after two of his close friends, in the last 10 years, until they died, Boomer said.

He handed out holly to all his friends every Christmas, she said.

“He even put \$20 in a Christmas card for me this year because I had said, in passing, that Christmas was going to be lean this year. We were only friends, Boomer said. “He really cared for people.”

The blaze was reported about 11 p.m., police said.

Central Saanich police and Sidney-North Saanich RCMP were first on the scene.

The fire threatened one trailer to the south but did not spread, French said.

Flames and smoke could be seen coming through the trailer’s windows, said Sidney-North Saanich RCMP Cpl. Erin Fraser.

About 24 volunteer firefighters from Central Saanich fought the blaze. When they were able to do so, they entered the trailer.

The man was declared deceased at the scene, Fraser said. The man’s dog is missing.

Younger became aware of the fire only when police arrived. He said he was inside his home “having a couple of beers with a pal” when he heard the commotion.

“All of a sudden, my place was surrounded by police officers — I thought they were coming to tell us to shut up — and I looked outside and there was smoke coming out,” Younger said.

He noticed flames near his friend’s new camper van and yelled at him to move it.

“He said, ‘I can’t drive right now,’ and threw me his keys and I gave them to the guy I was having a couple of beers with and, while the flames were licking up the side, he pulled it out,” Younger said.

Younger said Scott suffered from mental-health problems, including alcoholism, and once came out of his home in his underwear and beat Younger’s truck with a pitchfork, causing about \$7,000 damage.

“He didn’t remember doing it [the next day],” Younger said.

The fire is not thought to be suspicious.

Police, the fire department and the B.C. Coroners Service are investigating, Fraser said.

It is not known whether the home had a smoke detector and, if so, whether it was working.

French said the fire department has a smoke-detector program.

“We have given them to both First Nations to ensure every resident on band lands have them,” he said. “I’m not sure if the smoke detector was working or if he even had one.”

See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/man-59-dies-in-fire-at-tsawout-first-nation-1.2151987#sthash.XcQudlTU.dpuf>

Group providing support to Inuit in Toronto

‘More people will go to Ottawa because that’s where the support is’

Evan Careen, Published on January 18, 2016



About 57 people got together recently for a Christmas feat put off by iTUK, Toronto’s first official Inuit group.

When Rob Lackie moved to Toronto 15 years ago, he quickly discovered there were little to no resources available for Inuit living in the city.

He’s hoping to change that with Inuit of Toronto Urban Katimavvik (iTUK), an organization that aims to provide help with housing, employment services, family services and social gatherings.

“It’s been in the works for a while,” said Lackie, originally from Happy Valley-Goose Bay. “There’s a group of us that live here in Toronto and we realized there aren’t any Inuit specific services at all in the city. No language programs, interpretation services or anything like that.”

iTUK was contacted last year by Tungasuvvingat Inuit in Ottawa, an organization that provides these types of services to Inuit living in that city. That organization is looking at

building a strategy to unite the southern communities in Canada so people who are coming from the north will know who to contact in the south, Lackie said. They attended a meeting in Ottawa in November with representatives from five other major Canadian cities to see the services available in Ottawa, which he described as “amazing.”

“We want to do something similar here in Toronto if we can,” he said. “A lot of the people who come down from the north are here for education, medical reasons, etc. and they don’t know how to get around the city, how to apply for funding, things like that.” He said the long-term goal is to set up these services in major southern cities across the country so Inuit coming from the north can avail of these services wherever they go. According to a Statistic Canada report from 2011 there are about 1,300 Inuit living in the Toronto area. Ottawa has the largest Inuit population outside of the north and Lackie said this is possibly due to the programs available there.

“It’s definitely, a ‘If you build it, they will come’ scenario,” he said. “Right now there isn’t anything here, so more people will go to Ottawa because that’s where the support is.”

The organization is currently operating out of a virtual office, but is in the process of becoming incorporated to apply for government funding. He hopes to get that in place soon in order to have a physical office to work out of and further support for the services provided.

The response to the organization has been positive, Lackie said. The group recently held its annual Christmas feast and 59 people attended, which he said is an improvement. “Word is getting out there and more people are coming together,” he said. “That’s what we’re looking for, the awareness.”

iTUK can be reached via social media and has an active Facebook group with more than 100 members to provide information on developments and upcoming events. Lackie can be reached at rob@inuitoftoronto.com.

Direct Link: <http://www.thelabradorian.ca/news/local/2016/1/18/group-providing-support-to-inuit-in-toronto.html>

Zatorski opens aboriginal speakers series

CITIZEN STAFF / PRINCE GEORGE CITIZEN
JANUARY 17, 2016 09:48 PM



A member of the Lheidli T'enneh Nation will be the first to take the podium as an aboriginal alumni speaker series begins Monday at the University of Northern British Columbia.

Rena Zatorski graduated with a bachelor of arts in political science in 2002. As an undergraduate student, she participated in a field school in Russia to study the Sakha reindeer herders.

After graduating, Zatorski worked as a territory researcher for Lheidli T'enneh and has served two terms as an elected councillor where she was deeply involved the band's treaty process and the proposed final agreement.

She also spearheaded the Highway of Tears symposium in 2006, which brought together more than 90 different organizations, families and the public to speak to issues surrounding missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

In 2010, Zatorski received a certificate in project management through UNBC's continuing studies department and in 2012 began Red Earth Management, which provide project management services to First Nations.

She is also attending Simon Fraser University, where she's working on an executive master of business administration degree through the Beedie School of Business.

The event will be held in Agora room 7-152 from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and is free and open to the public.

It will be followed by a reception at the Elders Room in the First Nations Centre.

As many as 10 aboriginal alumni from across the region will be featured in the series.

For more information contact aboriginal community connections co-ordinator Veronica Haddon at 250-960-5329.

- See more at: <http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/news/local-news/zatorski-opens-aboriginal-speakers-series-1.2153048#sthash.YI0zkkP0.dpuf>

Provincial Liberals pledge \$15 million per year for First Nations housing if elected

IAN GRAHAM / THOMPSON CITIZEN
JANUARY 19, 2016 03:04 PM



Manitoba Liberal party leader Rana Bokhari says her party will spend \$15 million a year to help improve housing on northern First Nations if her party wins the most seats in this April's provincial election. Photograph By Manitoba Liberal Party

Manitoba's Liberal party is pledging to provide \$15 million for housing construction in northern First Nations communities per year if elected as the government in April.

The funding would increase in subsequent years once the budget was balanced, party leader Rana Bokhari told reporters in Winnipeg Jan. 18.

"This is our commitment to those communities that we will work with you in partnership to make sure that your communities have the housing requirements they need," said Bokhari. "Basic necessities of life. Nobody should be struggling for that."

The Liberal leader said the housing situation in Manitoba First Nations communities, including many in the province's north, is an embarrassment and that it isn't good enough for the province to wait for the federal government before taking action.

“Manitoba has been facing a humanitarian crisis in our First Nations communities,” said Bokhari. “One of the biggest embarrassments for our province in terms of government is the fact that they've never addressed the housing crisis and taken a leadership role and that they've always waited for the federal government to come on board. The Manitoba Liberal party is taking leadership role in this and regardless of whether or not the feds are on board or not, which I believe they will be, we are committed to taking and addressing the First Nations northern communities housing crisis head on. This is a humanitarian issue and Manitobans are Manitobans and the fact that we feel like it's OK to play political football with people's lives living just a few kilometres north, it's unacceptable and our generation will not accept that and our party will not accept that.”

Decisions about where the money will be spent will be made in consultation with leaders from communities in dire need of housing, says Bokhari.

“We’re going to get people at the table and that's why some of the community leaders are here [at the announcement] today because we're going to start that conversation about what exactly that looks like in terms of housing,” she said. “That's why the candidates are here as well because they're somewhat of our northern caucus and they will be taking the lead on all of this.”

And while waiting for the federal government to come to the table before taking action is not an option, Bokhari said she feels Justin Trudeau’s Liberal government will be a willing partner in improving housing on First Nations.

“I have every bit of confidence in our federal government,” the provincial Liberal leader said. “I believe in the fact that they understand that this is a crisis now and we just can't keep doing the same thing over.”

- See more at: <http://www.thompsoncitizen.net/news/nickel-belt/provincial-liberals-pledge-15-million-per-year-for-first-nations-housing-if-elected-1.2154292#sthash.KblSX9P7.dpuf>

First Nations women have always been leaders



By: Mary Agnes Welch

Posted: **01/20/2016 3:00 AM** | Last Modified: 01/20/2016 7:54 AM |

Being a First Nations chief in Manitoba is a tough job. You're on call all the time, the person everyone looks to for solutions to every problem. You must cope with the triple whammy of chronic underfunding, profound poverty and a Canadian public that suspects you're a corrupt, overpaid mooch.

You are stymied by unyielding federal bureaucracy and a relic of an Indian Act. You lurch from one deadly crisis to another. Then, band politics being what they are, you get defeated after two years.

It's a wonder anyone wants the job, let alone a woman. Still, Manitoba has remarkably few female chiefs, far fewer than the national average. That's despite the fact indigenous women overwhelmingly dominate grassroots movements such as Idle No More, are three times better-educated than indigenous men and seemingly run nearly every social service organization, band department, policy shop and community group in the indigenous world.

First, though, a bit of good news.

Nationally, about a fifth of First Nations are helmed by women, roughly the same as the percentage of cities led by female mayors. That's an imperfect comparison, to be sure, but a useful gauge. Similarly, about 22 per cent of band councillors in Manitoba are women, which is also pretty close to the number of female city councillors across Canada -- 26 per cent.

In the last 20 years, the number of female chiefs has doubled Canada-wide, according to Cora Voyageur, a University of Calgary sociologist and First Nations woman who literally wrote the (only) book on this topic. As she says, it's tough to find a corner of the mainstream political world where the number of women in elected roles has doubled in two decades.

Now for the bad: more than a third of the province's reserves have no women serving on council at all. And, Manitoba has only seven female chiefs, about 11 per cent of the total and well below the national average. Until Monday, when Canupawakpa Dakota Nation elected veteran indigenous leader Viola Eastman as chief, the number was even thinner.

What's particularly galling, in an odd way, is those seven represent some of the most talented chiefs in the province. Imagine what Manitoba could be if there were more chiefs like them, more like Francine Meeches, longtime chief of Swan Lake First Nation. She's a tiny, wiry powerhouse, a bit intimidating in her sternness and one of the architects of that reserve's remarkable economic development. She's bluntly upbraided fellow First Nations leaders for misspending and corruption. Now, she's among the Treaty 1 chiefs involved in the deal to buy the Kapyong Barracks from the federal government.

Or, take War Lake's Betsy Kennedy, the longest-serving female chief in the province. When asked to describe her, people I spoke with used the word "revered." Kennedy has navigated the complex negotiations with Manitoba Hydro over the Keeyask dam. She's earned a reputation as one of the most progressive chiefs when it comes to transparency, accountability and community engagement. And, as she told a Commons committee two years ago, she handles conflict with aplomb.

"I get more people being upset and yelling at me, and they know, but they know also that I won't get mad or upset," she told MPs on the status of women committee in 2014. "It's a way of allowing them to vent, because they won't do that to my councillors who are male, or I don't notice male chiefs being spoken to in that manner."

Traditional indigenous society has often been described as egalitarian, in some cultures even matriarchal. But Voyageur says the Indian Act is one reason among many that few women run or get elected chief. Until 1951, the Indian Act decreed that only men could vote in band elections -- just one, perhaps not even the most egregious, example of the controlling, infantilizing colonial rules imposed on indigenous people that marginalized women the most. The Indian Act and all of its mechanisms sought to keep women out of the public sphere, consigned to the realm of children, kitchen and church even more than non-indigenous society did, argues Voyageur.

Sheila North Wilson, the first female grand chief of the north's Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, said Indian agents wanted only to deal with the men of a particular band. Even though women were still consulted, were still the delegaters and organizers and advisers who wielded significant power behind the scenes, it was men who were slotted into leadership roles early on. That pattern persists.

"All along, it's been women that have been active in the background," said North Wilson, who sees signs of progress. "In the community, we know who they are."

Manitoba is about to celebrate the 100th anniversary of (some) women winning the vote. And the country is soon to begin an inquiry into violence against indigenous women and

girls, an inquiry that's sure to expose the worst effects of a virulent combination of misogyny and racism on the daily lives of aboriginal women.

There may be no better time to encourage the remarkable cadre of women working in the background to step forward and take their place as chiefs.

Direct Link: <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/analysis/first-nations-women-have-always-been-leaders-365875401.html>

First Nation farm start-up aid offered by Indian Agricultural Program of Ontario

By **Robin Burridge** -
Jan 20, 2016

ONTARIO—The Indian Agricultural Program of Ontario (IAPO) is seeking First Nations individuals who are interested in starting their own farming business and are currently accepting applications for its Beginning Farmers Program.

IAPO is a non-profit Ontario corporation owned by the Status Indian Farmers in Ontario that seeks to empower First Nation communities through financial and training support for farmers.

“The Beginning Farmers Program is designed as a four-year program,” Mark Leahy, business advisor with IAPO, explained to The Expositor. “It helps set up new farmers aged 16-35 who are interested in farming livestock, crops, honey, maple syrup, aquaculture or mixed farming.”

Ms. Leahy said that there are two elements to the program: financing and training.

“The training is over four years,” continued Mr. Leahy. “The idea is to support the participants for the first four years of their farming business to encourage success. This includes two workshops a year on topics such as business management, training and record keeping. Individuals are also provided a mentor with experience in a similar type of farming.”

More information and applications are available by contacting Mr. Leahy at 1-800-363-0329 or by emailing info@indianag.on.ca.

IAPO is accepting applications for the program from January 15 to March 11, 2016.

Direct Link: <http://www.manitoulin.ca/2016/01/20/first-nation-farm-start-up-aid-offered-by-indian-agricultural-program-of-ontario/>

Thousands of dogs frozen, slaughtered on Manitoba First Nations, rescuer says

'There's dogs everywhere — emaciated, skinny, skinny dogs ... and they're ... living off garbage'

By Erin Brohman, CBC News Posted: Jan 18, 2016 12:04 AM CT Last Updated: Jan 18, 2016 7:47 AM CT



Jasmine Colucci posted photos on Facebook of dogs she's seen while carrying out rescue operations in a number of Manitoba's First Nations communities. Here, a starving dog lies in garbage. (Jasmine Colucci)

A dog rescuer who has visited a number of Manitoba First Nations is petitioning the provincial government to help remote communities manage stray dogs.

Jasmine Colucci, who works for K-9 Advocates Manitoba, carried out dog rescue operations in Dakota Tipi First Nation, Sandy Bay First Nation, Norway House and Long Plain First Nation in January.

She took photographs that show frozen dogs, animals lying in heaps with bullet holes in their heads and homeless dogs taking shelter in dumps.

"It is honestly like a Third World country," said Colucci, who is a member of Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation in Newfoundland.

"There's dogs everywhere — emaciated, skinny, skinny dogs ... and they're full of parasites, worms and living off garbage."



Jasmine Colucci believes these dogs that froze to death in winter on a Manitoba First Nation. Colucci wants remote communities to implement laws requiring dog owners to provide fences, housing and food for their animals. (Jasmine Colucci)

Colucci has seen dogs chase large rats living in the dumps and she has taken in puppies that were being eaten by the rodents, she said.

She and fellow rescuer David Brooker head out to the communities several times a week, responding to calls from band members for help. Their organization is one of several volunteer rescue groups in the province that are overwhelmed by the situation.

A number of Manitoba communities are without bylaws, catchers and licensing programs to manage the dogs, Colucci and Brooker said. In four months, they've cared for 150 dogs, and all rescue operations are at capacity and in debt, they said.

The two want a preventative approach to dog overpopulation, but said much of the work they do is responding to emergencies, and getting ahead seems impossible.

First Nations chiefs also expressed concern about the situation.

Long Plain First Nation Chief Dennis Meeches said he's implemented a rule that prohibits more than one dog per household, but community members do not always follow it.

"It's a bit disheartening," he said.

The community had a contract with a dog catcher in Portage la Prairie, Man., but that ended when dog owners became upset.

"The company chose not to come back to Long Plain because they were being threatened," Meeches said.

Now free-roaming dogs are more abundant than ever, Meeches said, and he worries they could attack community members, including children.

Province understaffed: Colucci

Under the Animal Care Act, the Manitoba government must uphold a law that requires dog owners to make sure their animals are not abused or neglected.

People can report mistreatment to the Office of the Chief Veterinarian, which is expected to investigate, but Colucci said that's not always possible given the demand.

There are four full-time animal protection officers (APO) in a province where thousands of dogs roam remote communities.

A spokesperson for the Office of the Chief Veterinarian said there are a number of other people, including police, who can enforce the act, however it's on an "as-needed basis," meaning a complaint must precede the investigation.

"The amount that we call them is unbelievable, and there's not enough staff. It will take days," Colucci said, noting by the time there's a response, the animal could have died, particularly in -40 C weather.

As self-governing bodies, First Nations in Manitoba should implement laws to manage the situation, she said.

"So that we don't have to go there and find the dog like that. It shouldn't even be an issue in the first place."

\$25 per tail



Jasmine Colucci rescued and adopted Fozzy after he was kicked in the face and suffered a broken jaw. (Facebook)

Some of Manitoba's First Nations have resorted to dog culls to control the problem. Though Meeches said his community is not one of them, Colucci said it happens in others.

She and Brooker said they want to collaborate with elders, chiefs and councils to minimize the number of dogs being killed.

"They were dumping the bodies just randomly in the forest," Colucci said. "You can see the chopped-off tails, because that's what they're getting paid for."

Dog bounty money could be used to pay for a spay and neuter clinic, she said.

But Dakota Tipi First Nation Chief David Pashe said that approach may not work in his community.



Jasmine Colucci shows the effect of frostbite on a rescue dog. (Jasmine Colucci)

"A lot of our people are dog lovers.... They hate to see that [spay and neutering] happen to the animals," he said, adding indigenous populations believe dogs to be sacred animals.

Colucci added that spaying and neutering is only effective when a community has regular access to a veterinarian, and owners want the procedure and can afford it.

She plans to circulate her petition online in the coming days with the hope that it will save dogs' lives.

"Every time I have to euthanize a dog because it's been abused or so far gone that we had no choice [but] to euthanize it, it never gets easier," she said.

"I will equally be as heartbroken every time."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/dogs-shot-manitoba-first-nations-1.3408167>

Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement

Charter challenge into lack of indigenous people on juries dismissed

Judge rules 'No merit' to Jeremy Newborn's argument

By Gareth Hampshire, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 18, 2016 12:07 PM MT Last Updated: Jan 18, 2016 12:28 PM MT



Jeremy Newborn listening to testimony in court in December

An indigenous man's constitutional argument that his right to a representative jury was violated has been dismissed, by an Alberta Court of Queen's Bench judge.

[In a written decision dated Jan. 7,](#) Justice Brian Burrows rejected an application by Jeremy Newborn, who is charged with second-degree murder in the December 2012 death of a man on the Edmonton LRT.

Newborn has [pleaded not guilty](#) to the charge.

His jury trial was originally scheduled for October 2014, but it didn't go ahead because the defence asked for an adjournment to challenge Alberta's jury selection process.

Newborn's lawyer made the request after his mother walked around the area where 178 people who were summoned to be members of the jury were gathered.

She didn't see anyone who appeared to be of aboriginal descent.

At a hearing at Court of Queen's Bench in Edmonton in December, Jeremy Newborn's legal team called an expert in statistics and sociology to give evidence.

Jacqueline Quinless testified that given the population of Edmonton and the portion of people of indigenous descent, she would expect to see nine aboriginal people in a group of 178.

Quinless outlined a number of reasons why the jury array did not include any aboriginal people, including the effects of colonialism, racism and stereotyping, as well as the legacy of residential schools and higher rates of incarceration and involvement with police.

Excluding people with criminal records 'reasonable'

As a result, Newborn's lawyers argued indigenous people face additional barriers to serving on juries.

One of their key arguments focused on the part of the Alberta jury act which excludes people from jury duty if they're charged with a criminal offence or have been convicted of a crime and not received a pardon.

Newborn's lawyers said that part of the law disproportionately affects indigenous people, who the judge notes in his decision, make up two per cent of Canada's population, but comprise 20 per cent of the country's prison population.

At the December hearing, Crown lawyer David Kamal, a constitutional expert, argued permitting people with criminal records to sit on juries could potentially undermine public confidence in the justice system.

After considering the arguments Judge Burrows ruled the exclusion of people who have committed crimes is "reasonable and acceptable".

In his decision, he said people who have been convicted of a crime or are currently charged are likely not to be impartial, adding the fact that part of the act excludes a greater number of one ethnic origin doesn't affect the reasonableness of such an exclusion.

Judge Burrows said the disproportionate effect of this exclusion in the case of indigenous people "points to a shameful feature of modern Canadian society."

He concludes that exclusion doesn't mean the jury is unrepresentative, but instead promotes impartiality on the jury.

Jeremy Newborn's trial is scheduled for four weeks beginning in April 2016.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/charter-challenge-into-lack-of-indigenous-people-on-juries-dismissed-1.3408855>

'Lack of urgency' in response to missing First Nations students, child advocate says

'We don't value them enough,' Irwin Elman says of First Nations youth in Thunder Bay for school

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 19, 2016 7:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jan 19, 2016 7:00 AM ET



Ontario's children and youth advocate Irwin Elman says all levels of government need to take a 'whatever is necessary' approach to funding services for First Nations children. (CBC)

The inquest into the deaths of seven First Nations students in Thunder Bay, Ont., is drawing attention to the disparities in their treatment compared to non-Indigenous students, according to the Ontario Advocate for Children and Youth.

The inquest is examining the circumstances surrounding the deaths, between 2000 and 2011, of young people from remote First Nations who came to Thunder Bay to attend high school. Most of their communities have little in the way of secondary education.

A Thunder Bay police officer testified on Monday that it took days for police to get transit video of 15-year-old Jordan Wabasse, who disappeared after getting off a city bus near his boarding home in February 2011.

"To me that speaks to a sense of a lack of urgency," child advocate Irwin Elman said. "Not criticizing any one individual, but it speaks to the sense that we don't really understand what [First Nations students] are going through and we don't value them enough, as if they're our own children."



Jordan Wabasse, from Webequie First Nation, was 15 years old when he died in Thunder Bay in 2011. (First Nations Youth Inquest exhibits)

The inquest also heard testimony on Monday about the way First Nations schools are funded compared to provincial schools.

Jordan Wabasse attended the Matawa Learning Centre in Thunder Bay in the months before his disappearance.

The centre had one teacher and a principal for 25 students who were attempting to complete credits in Grades 9 to 12, jurors were told. It provided little in the way of support services and no after-hours programming.

"We provided what we could with what we had," former Matawa education manager Murray Waboose testified.

Waboose said schools for First Nations students from reserves are funded by the federal government and only receive funding for "instructional services".

Provincially-funded schools have many other "funding envelopes" for things such as administration or special education, he said.

It's time to stop arguing over who pays for essential services for children, Elman said.

"I really do think we need a 'whatever is necessary' approach by all levels of government," he said. "When you hear the stories of what these young people are experiencing, it really just takes political will, from all levels of government and institutions, to provide what is necessary and we can do it."

Watch live streaming [video from the First Nation student deaths inquest here](#).

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/lack-of-urgency-in-response-to-missing-first-nations-students-child-advocate-says-1.3409516>

Man accused of murder at First Nations student deaths inquest in Thunder Bay, Ont.

Two people testified they heard Stephen Cole confess to killing Jordan Wabasse in 2011

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 21, 2016 7:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jan 21, 2016 7:00 AM ET



A man was accused of murder Wednesday at the inquest into the deaths of seven First Nations students in Thunder Bay, Ont., but the man denied the allegations when he was called to testify.

The inquest is examining the deaths of seven young people who came to Thunder Bay from their remote First Nations to attend high school.

Jordan Wabasse was last seen getting off a transit bus near his boarding home around 10 p.m. on February 7, 2011. His body was found on May 10, 2011, more than two kilometres away in the Kaministiquia River near the James Street bridge.

At the inquest, Riley Freeman told jurors that in February of 2011 he was standing outside the movie theatre having a cigarette with his best friend, Stephen Cole.

Freeman testified that's when Cole said he had pushed Wabasse off a bridge.



Jordan Wabasse from Webequie First Nation died in 2011 while attending school in Thunder Bay. He was 15. (CBC)

"I was extremely shocked," said Freeman who was in his early teens at the time. "I was really young and I knew that was wrong."

Freeman said he didn't tell police about the conversation even after he heard Wabasse was missing because he was scared.

Kirk Jedyk also testified that his half-brother, Cole confessed to him about killing Wabasse.

"He told me he killed a kid and pushed him off the bridge for a bag of weed, Jedyk said.

'I'm not a rat'

Coroner's counsel asked Jedyk why he didn't tell police about the conversation with Cole.

"I'm not a rat," Jedyk replied.

The jury was dismissed when Cole first took the stand. The 21-year-old was advised by coroner's counsel that he had a right to a lawyer, which Cole declined.

The jury then returned to their seats to hear Cole questioned about the statements Freeman and Jedyk said he made.

"Do you think I would be walking around telling all these people this — it wouldn't be a very smart thing to do," he said.

Cole denied ever knowing Jordan Wabasse.

"I didn't even hear his name until police started harassing me about this," he said.

Under the Coroner's Act, none of Cole's testimony from the inquest can ever be used in a criminal court of law.

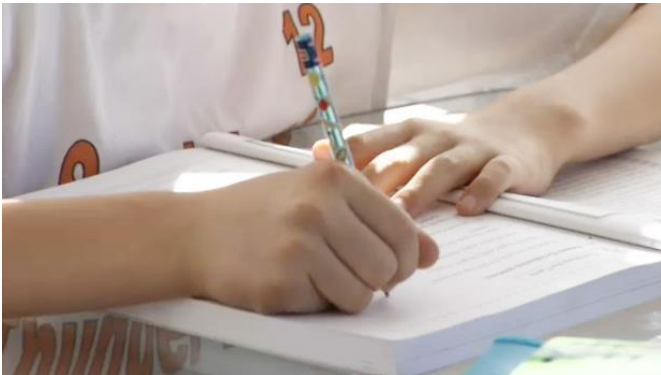
Testimony about Jordan Wabasse's death continues at the inquest on Thursday.

Watch live streaming [video from the First Nation student deaths inquest here](#).

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/man-accused-of-murder-at-first-nations-student-deaths-inquest-in-thunder-bay-ont-1.3412581>

Aboriginal Education & Youth

Nearly half of Manitoba aboriginal students don't graduate high school: auditor



Manitoba's auditor general says despite government efforts, the graduation gap between indigenous and non-aboriginal students is worsening.

The Canadian Press
Published Friday, January 15, 2016 4:35PM EST

WINNIPEG - Manitoba's auditor general says despite government efforts, the graduation gap between indigenous and non-aboriginal students is worsening.

The report from Norm Ricard says only 55 per cent of aboriginal students are graduating from high school, compared to 96 per cent of non-aboriginal students.

It says the gap has grown since 2010, when the government started measuring the results of its efforts to help aboriginal students complete high school.

The report says the government has not given school divisions and other partners directions on how to improve the graduation rate for aboriginal students.

It also says the department hasn't set hard targets for what the graduation rate should be.

The government says it accepts the report's findings and is working on improvements such as a greater focus on literacy skills earlier in student lives.

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/nearly-half-of-manitoba-aboriginal-students-don-t-graduate-high-school-auditor-1.2739375>

Aboriginal educator fought to see every child graduate

ELISE STOLTE, EDMONTON JOURNAL

More from Elise Stolte, Edmonton Journal

Published on: January 18, 2016 | Last Updated: January 18, 2016 6:06 PM MST



First Nations educator Phyllis Cardinal died Jan. 16, 2016, at age 64.

Called a bulldog at times for her tenacity, Phyllis Cardinal gave more than 30 years of her life to fighting inequities in the educational system.

The longtime teacher, principal and First Nations administrator, best known as the founding principal for Edmonton's Amiskwaciy Academy, died Jan. 16 at the age of 64 from a long-standing illness.

Amiskwaciy is a public high school near the former City Centre Airport that uses smudging and other aboriginal cultural practices to create a safe, comfortable

learning environment for students at risk of not graduating. It opened in 2000 and added Grades 7 and 8 this year.

“My dad said the other day, she did things in education that people said couldn’t be done,” said Deanna Morin, her daughter.

Few believed she and former superintendent Angus McBeath could get Amiskwaciy off the ground, said Morin. “They started lobbying different organizations, oil companies and governments to get the money. ... I’ll remember her for her perseverance.”

Cardinal was raised in Edmonton, studied education at the University of Alberta and earned two post-graduate degrees in the United States. She started teaching in 1977. Her textbook *The Cree People* won the 1998 Alberta Educational Title of the Year award.

Cardinal’s last position was at Enoch’s Kitaskinaw School. The Journal profiled the school in 2010, when students’ reading scores had improved dramatically, attendance rates were up and the school had new portable classrooms. She retired the next year amid staff allegations of falsified attendance and grant records. Fraud charges laid by the RCMP were later stayed.

A related investigation by federal aboriginal affairs officials found no evidence of fraud, but struck 37 of 216 students from the roll count.

A prayer service for Cardinal is scheduled for Tuesday at Amiskwaciy Academy from 4 p.m. to 11 p.m. A wake and funeral are scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday at the Saddle Lake Cree Nation.

Direct Link: <http://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/aboriginal-educator-fought-to-see-every-child-graduate>

Trent University Indigenous Education Program Hopes To Boost Number Of Aboriginal Teachers

CP | By Liam Casey, The Canadian Press
Posted: 01/20/2016 10:08 am EST Updated: 01/20/2016 11:59 am EST

THE CANADIAN PRESS 

TORONTO — An Ontario university will offer a new program next fall that it hopes will help boost aboriginal numbers among teachers.

Cathy Bruce, interim dean of education at Trent University, says the school will offer an indigenous bachelor of education degree program.

The new program is partly in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report last summer that called on all levels of government to change policies to repair problems caused by residential schools.

The report also recommended that students be taught about the history and current plight of First Nations, Metis and Inuit.



*The program is in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report that called for policies repairing problems caused by residential schools.
(Photo:Wherearethechildren.ca)*

Bruce says the school is still accepting applications and hopes to have 15 students, all who self-identify as aboriginal, start the first year of the program in September.

She says the new program is working closely with the university's indigenous studies program and will offer courses such as an Ojibwa language course and math course specifically related to indigenous culture.

"We need to increase the actual number of indigenous teachers in Ontario schools so that students see those role models and students see that they too can become a teacher," Bruce said.

Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ont., offers a similar program that allows graduates to teach children up to grade 6, whereas future Trent graduates will be able to teach through high school.



Trent University. (Photo: Churtichaga/Flickr)

Some of the professors in the new program will be aboriginal, Bruce said.

"And if this program grows as we hope and believe it will, we can hire more aboriginal instructors," she said.

A report released last summer said public school teachers in Ontario didn't receive enough training on aboriginal issues.

Only 29 per cent of elementary schools and 47 per cent of secondary schools offer training on aboriginal issues to teachers, said a report by People for Education, a research and advocacy group.

Annie Kidder, the group's executive director, called on the provincial government to implement immediate changes to add more professional development for teachers about issues facing aboriginal people in Canada.

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/01/20/new-ontario-university-program-hopes-to-boost-number-of-aboriginal-teachers_n_9025302.html

Métis toddler locked in adoption battle between foster parents, government

'It's horrible. It's really really horrible ... because we fear for her so much,' says foster mother

By Yvette Brend, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 19, 2016 3:32 PM PT Last Updated: Jan 20, 2016 6:55 AM PT



The Métis toddler lives on Vancouver Island and so far has no idea that her life may change forever any day now. (Michael McArthur/CBC)

A Métis toddler living on Vancouver Island is caught up in a bitter legal fight between her foster parents and B.C.'s child protective services over her future — and the future of other foster children like her.

The Métis foster couple are fighting to adopt the 27-month-old girl they have raised since infancy.

But the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) plans to remove the child and settle her in Ontario with a non-Métis couple that is already raising her two siblings, which she has never met.

"A child's best interest must be the first and foremost consideration in permanency planning," the ministry said in a press release Monday, but could make no further comment on the specific case for privacy reasons.

Foster parents 'legal strangers'

The couple's lawyer argued in B.C. Supreme Court on Monday to allow the girl to stay with her Métis foster family until the court considers a constitutional challenge revolving around the rights of foster children.

"The province is arguing that they are legal strangers. They are only paid caregivers. That is actually nonsense. These are de facto parents," said Jack Hitrich, who represents the couple.

They are launching the legal challenge because they believe this child's "best interests" should be determined in an open court by a judge, not by MCFD in closed-door meeting, said Hitrich.



"The province is arguing that they are legal strangers. They are only paid caregivers. That is actually nonsense. These are de facto parents," said lawyer Jack Hittrich. (CBC)

"This little girl wakes up every morning and says 'Hi Mommy! Hi Daddy!' to the foster parents. These are the foster parents that she has bonded with all her life," said Hittrich.

"[This is] a situation where foster children are deprived of their fundamental constitutional rights to have their best interests considered ... and that's a travesty," he added.

'She feels like our daughter'

The Métis foster couple who actually raised the girl — referred to as S.S — cannot be identified under court order.

But they told CBC News they are devastated that the ministry charged with protecting children is removing the girl from a loving home willing to adopt her.

"It's horrible. It's really really horrible ... because we fear for her so much," said the tearful foster mother.

The child has a strong bond to her foster family, they say.

"She feels like our daughter. We've raised her since she was born," the foster mother told CBC.

The father explained, "If she gets taken away she's going to wonder where is mom and dad."

They say they can not understand why social workers seem to be ignoring the advice of medical experts and as well want to place the child with a non-Métis family after letting her live with them for two years.



'If she gets taken away she's going to wonder: where is Mom and Dad?' said the foster father of the child, who cannot be identified. (Michael McArthur/CBC)

They argue that a court should determine the toddler's future after considering her best interests and weighing expert advice about her emotional needs against the fact she has two siblings living in Ontario.

The foster mother said if the girl stays in their family, they are well-placed to preserve her relationship with her B.C.-based biological parents, who have expressed their support for this in a letter.

"The foster parents here have fallen in love with our daughter, and we've fallen in love with them," the parents told CBC.

The foster mother also planned to take the toddler to meet and connect with her siblings in Ontario, as the family often travels there.

MCFD makes final call

The ministry responsible for child protection urged the parents not to speak to the media, as they are not allowed to talk about children in their care.

MCFD Minister Stephanie Cadieux was unavailable for comment.

"Removing of this young infant from a Métis family is absolutely absurd. "

Keith Henry, president of the B.C. Métis Federation

A statement released yesterday outlined its stance in this case, which was considered by an "exception committee" which is comprised of social workers, and a Métis delegate, according to the province.

In the end, while the foster parents' wishes are considered, the final call is made by an MCFD director, it said.

"Under the Child, Family and Community Service Act, a delegated director is responsible for planning and placement decisions for children and youth in care, all of which are subject to approval by the courts."

"While the ministry often seeks the views of foster parents, the director is legally responsible for making placement decisions that are in the best interest of the child or youth."

Métis advocates back foster parents

The B.C. Métis Federation is backing the foster parents in the fight, after reviewing the case.

"This is outrageous," said president Keith Henry.

"Removing of this young infant from a Métis family is absolutely absurd. You have a strong Métis family there willing to bring this child into a culturally-aware family and into her own community."

"The thought of removing this child to a non- Métis family provinces away is completely ridiculous.... The heart of this case is that the MCFD believes they know what is right for the Métis people," he added.

The case is being heard in B.C. Supreme Court until Wednesday, when a decision is expected.



"This is wrong," said Keith Henry, president of the B.C. Métis Federation. (CBC)

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/metis-adoption-bc-toddler-mcfd-social-workers-fight-birth-vancouver-island-1.3410368>

NDP record poor on aboriginal education

WINNIPEG SUN

FIRST POSTED: TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2016 05:38 PM CST |

UPDATED: TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2016 05:41 PM CST



(Winnipeg Sun files)

For a government that claims to have the best interests of aboriginal people at heart, Manitoba's NDP sure does a lousy job of ensuring the province's indigenous people are getting the education they need.

Manitoba's auditor general last week released a scathing report of the Selinger government's record on graduation rates among the province's aboriginal population. The report found that only 55% of aboriginals are graduating from high school, nowhere near the 96% rate among non-aboriginals.

That's down slightly from 57% in 2010. So not only is the problem bad, it's getting worse. Since 2004, the auditor general found, the NDP government has thrown a tonne of money at aboriginal education. Yet its plan on how to spend that money in terms of getting results was vague and poorly planned. The implementation plan was "weak," according to the report.

That's the true NDP approach, isn't it? Just throw money at a problem and hope it goes away without any objective planning or implementation strategies?

Over the past decade there have been very few resources to help aboriginal children transition from on-reserve communities to off-reserve schools, the report found. School division were provided with funding to support aboriginal students, yet they were given no specific direction on how to improve aboriginal graduation rates.

Government has done virtually nothing to identify the barriers that prevent higher graduation rates among aboriginal students. And there have been no formal efforts to measure graduation outcomes, the report found.

It's a pretty sad record.

We would think that improving graduation rates among some of the most disadvantaged communities in the province would be a top priority for any government. As the auditor general points out, all the literature shows that high school graduation is critical in gaining meaningful employment, achieving a higher income and improving the overall quality of life for any community.

Yet the Selinger government has shown, at best, only a passing interest in tackling this problem head-on.

They claim to stand up for the rights and welfare of Manitoba's aboriginal communities. Yet when it comes to something as important as ensuring indigenous people get the education they need to help end the cycle of poverty and hopelessness that so often plagues their communities, the NDP government is missing in action.

That to us is reckless and grossly irresponsible.

We could, and should, be doing so much better.

Direct Link: <http://www.winnipegsun.com/2016/01/19/ndp-record-poor-on-aboriginal-education>

Aboriginal Health

First Nations leaders cite deplorable health conditions, urge action

State of aboriginal health is a crisis that must be confronted by all Canadians, says Isadore Day

By Kristy Kirkup, The Canadian Press Posted: Jan 15, 2016 12:02 PM ET Last Updated: Jan 15, 2016 12:02 PM ET



Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day said the state of aboriginal health is a crisis that must be confronted by all Canadians. (submitted by Anishinabek Nation)

Indigenous leaders are pushing Canada to confront "deplorable" health conditions for their people as federal, territorial and provincial ministers prepare to meet in Vancouver next week to work on a new health accord.

Isadore Day, Ontario regional chief of the Assembly of First Nations and head of the assembly's health committee, said the state of aboriginal health is a crisis that must be confronted by all Canadians.

In a letter to federal Health Minister Jane Philpott, Day also emphasized the need for full indigenous participation in drafting a new health accord.

"I think it is really important for everyone to look at the truth," Day said in an interview.

"We are in the era of truth and reconciliation and I think that this is a major issue. If it wasn't for the Indian Act, if it wasn't for residential schools, if it wasn't for colonial

policy, the health conditions of our people wouldn't be in this state."

Aboriginal Peoples continue to face serious health challenges, including high rates of chronic and contagious diseases and shorter life expectancies, according to Health Canada data.

Tuberculosis infection rates, for example, are five times higher among First Nations people and 50 times higher among the Inuit population, than among the general population, the department said.

It also said an estimated 278 new HIV infections occurred in the aboriginal population in 2014, representing 10.8 per cent of all new infections that year.



Aboriginal people often endure health conditions that people would not and should not expect to see in Canada, Health Minister Philpott said. (Sean Kilpatrick/Canadian Press)

In an interview with The Canadian Press, Philpott said there are a number of other worrying health indicators, such as suicide rates among Inuit youth.

"These are very serious concerns," she said.

"They are an absolute priority for me to address, but I can't do that alone because obviously provincial and territorial governments are also implicated in addressing some of these concerns. So we will be all talking together and seeing how we can make progress in terms of those gaps."

In his letter to Philpott, Day noted the minister is attuned to the First Nations health crisis "having spent so many years practising medicine in very similar, Third-World conditions of West Africa."

Aboriginal people often endure health conditions that people would not and should not expect to see in Canada, Philpott said.

"I think that you will find that they are, in some cases, comparable to the kind of levels you would see in less-resourced countries and that is not acceptable," she said.

"It is something we very much aim to address."

Indigenous leaders will be part of the talks on the health accord, Philpott added, though she did not have specifics on what shape this will take.

"I am in discussions with indigenous leaders across the country about the best way for us to all work together, provinces, territories, the federal government and indigenous leaders," she said.

Manitoba Health Minister Sharon Blady said she appreciates

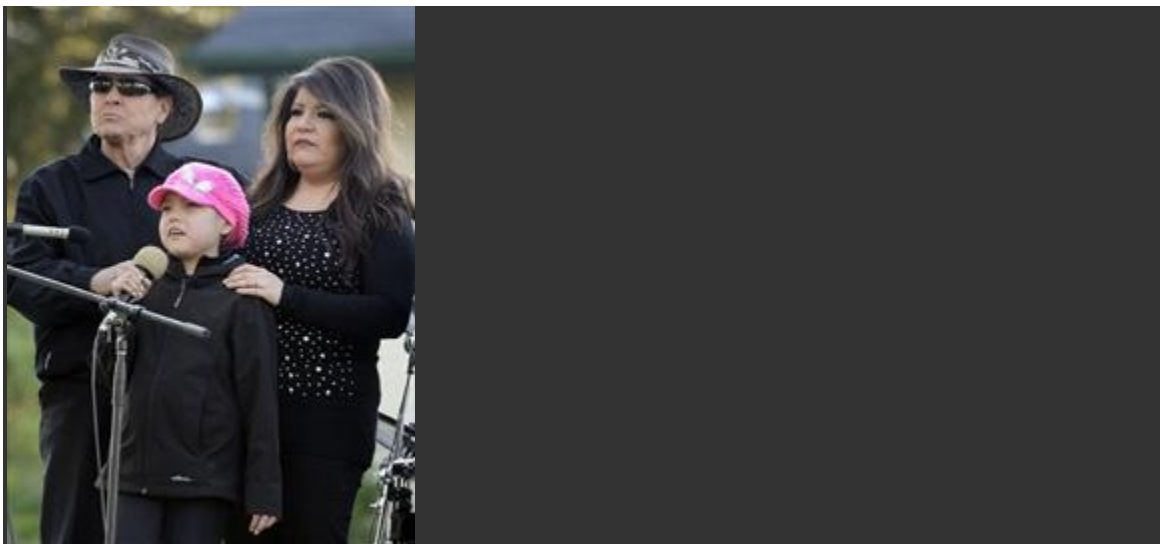
Philpott's openness to looking at how to include indigenous voices at the table.

"I really want to be able to see where the federal minister goes with this because I know how important it is for our people and to our provincial system here," Blady said.

"Our First Peoples live in conditions that are predicated on 150-plus years of unjust colonial practices that have had implications over generations and that puts an undue health burden on them ... it also puts a burden on the health-care system. It is an unfair burden ... they are carrying disproportionately."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/first-nations-leaders-cite-deplorable-health-conditions-1.3405442>

'We faced a lot of racism': mom of New Credit girl



MAKAYLA AND MOM

Hamilton Spectator file photo

Surrounded by family, including her mother Sonya, Makayla Sault, 11, speaks at an event in Ohsweken in May 2014.

Hamilton Spectator

By [Joanna Frketich](#) Jan 15, 2016

One year after the death of [Makayla Sault](#), her mother's only regret is agreeing to treat the 11-year-old New Credit girl's cancer with chemotherapy at all.

"I regret to this day...ever letting a drop of chemo touch her body," said Sonya Sault. "It ravaged her body."

After a year that has "been the hardest to endure," the pastor is now fighting for the legacy of her daughter, who quit chemotherapy for traditional healing.

Sault is speaking out about the racism she says her family endured at McMaster Children's Hospital and the need for First Nations culture to be incorporated into Hamilton Health Sciences.

"We would walk the halls of that hospital countless times and never did we see one representation of First Nations people anywhere," she said. "My hope and our prayer is that we really do see change, not just promises but real change, so that another First Nations family will never have to endure anything that we've endured."

Sault spoke at a conference at Six Nations Community Hall Nov. 27 aimed at harmonizing traditional healing and the health-care system after a [divisive court case](#) over forcing treatment on aboriginal children made it clear there is a deep divide between the two philosophies of care.

"From the very beginning of our time at McMaster, we wanted to use traditional medicines with Makayla and at the start, we were met with a flat out, 'No. No you can't use traditional medicines with chemotherapy,'" said Sault. "It angers me because I hear words like caring, respect, dignity and treating the child as a person but yet that was never shown to us. What Makayla said and what she wanted was never heard or respected."

Hamilton Health Sciences CEO Rob MacIsaac was on hand to hear the no-holds-barred speech from Sault as well as [two other moms](#) who also say they faced racism within McMaster's walls.

"It was very painful listening to their stories and a great motivation to continue to work hard to make the patient experience better," MacIsaac said. "I felt it was important for me to hear what the community was saying. There is no substitute for actually coming and listening."

Makayla was diagnosed in January 2014 with a rare and particularly deadly form of acute lymphoblastic leukemia with the Philadelphia Chromosome.

"We were completely devastated at the news to think that our daughter had cancer in her body," said Sault with her husband, pastor Ken Sault, at her side. "Terrified and overwhelmed with the news that we had received, we consented to chemotherapy."

But once treatment started, "We were never made to feel like we were real people," she added.

She describes inappropriate comments by staff, the family's concerns about side-effects being brushed aside and more focus being put on enrolling Makayla in clinical trials than incorporating traditional healing into her care.

"During our time at McMaster, we faced a lot of racism," said Sault. She recalled one health-care worker, saying, "I know all about your people and your kind." She talked about the high rates of diabetes, alcoholics and drug addictions and it didn't even have anything to do with what was going on with Makayla."

Sault was equally disturbed by the absence of First Nations culture in the hospital.

"We want somebody to talk to," said Sault. "First Nation social workers working in the hospital, the child-life specialists and it would be so awesome to have a room for First Nations people at the hospital where families can meet and come together and support one another."

Makayla went through 11 weeks of what was supposed to be two years of chemotherapy before abandoning the treatment.

"She begged us to take her off of the chemo, claiming that it was killing her body and she couldn't take it anymore and she didn't want to go that way," said Sault, who described "agonizing" over what to do. "I want to make it clear that Makayla made the decision. She said, 'Mom I will never return for chemotherapy. I don't care if it comes back.'"

Sault said it was only after Makayla decided to quit chemotherapy that the hospital was willing to incorporate traditional healing into her treatment.

"By then, it was too late," she said. "The damage was already done to her body and she couldn't continue anymore."

Sault accuses doctors of saying in front of Makayla that she would be taken from her home along with her two healthy brothers.

"I'll never forget that day when Makayla buried her hands in her face and cried and was terrified because she said, 'Mom can they really take me away from you?'"

Brant Family and Children's Services did not force treatment on Makayla and another aboriginal girl who quit chemotherapy in August 2014. The second girl, who can't be named because of a publication ban, was the centre of the first case in Canada of a hospital taking a children's aid society to court over its refusal to intervene.

Justice Gethin Edward ruled in Ontario Court family division in November 2014 that the mom had a constitutionally protected right to choose traditional healing for her daughter because it is an integral part of aboriginal culture.

He [clarified his ruling](#) in April, saying the best interests of a child must come first in deciding if aboriginal parents can abandon life-saving medicine. By that time, the second girl had relapsed and was back getting chemotherapy.

Health Minister Dr. Eric Hoskins has given Six Nations \$75,000 to find ways over the next year to harmonize traditional healing and the health-care system.

Sault says her daughter's "warrior spirit" compels her to fight for meaningful change since Makayla died Jan. 19 at home surrounded by her family and community as she wished.

"We'd like our daughter to be recognized for fighting, for standing up for what she believed in and what she believed was right in her heart."

Direct Link: <http://www.thespec.com/news-story/6235052--we-faced-a-lot-of-racism-mom-of-new-credit-girl/>

City programs for truth and reconciliation include funding for two aboriginal healing and wellness centres

by [Travis Lupick](#) on January 18th, 2016 at 11:26 AM



A staff report going to council on January 19 outlines specific programs the City of Vancouver can adopt to improve the lives of First Nations and aboriginal people still struggling with the effects of Canada's residential schools. [LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA](#)

The City of Vancouver is moving forward with efforts to implement “calls to action” contained in a document produced by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

In a [report](#) going before council on Tuesday, January 19, the city identifies 27 specific policies it deems fall within municipal jurisdiction.

Those programs can broadly be described as intended to improve the lives of First Nations and aboriginal people. They cover a range of policy areas, including health and community wellness, education and professional development, and indigenous rights and recognition.

Specifically, the staff report recommends the City of Vancouver “adopt in principle” plans to provide additional grants to aboriginal organizations working in communities, provide one-time funding for two aboriginal healing and wellness centres, and that it work to develop new programs for aboriginal children and youth.

“Vancouver is a young place in comparison to the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations who have cared for these lands and waters since

time immemorial,” the staff report reads. “It is time that this City recognize how much greater it could be by the acknowledgment of these Nations – important work that is already underway through our growing relations and aspirations with reconciliation.

“The TRC has provided us with perhaps the hardest truths about this country ever confronted,” it continues. “The injustices faced by generations of residential school survivors continue to impact Indigenous communities today. There is a role for the City in supporting reconciliation efforts for those wrongs.”

Direct Link: <http://www.straight.com/news/618336/city-programs-truth-and-reconciliation-include-funding-two-aboriginal-healing-and>

One in five Aboriginal people has suicidal thoughts at some point: StatsCan



Signage marks the Statistics Canada offices in Ottawa on Wednesday, July 21, 2010. (Sean Kilpatrick / THE CANADIAN PRESS)

The Canadian Press

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OTTAWA -- [A new study from Statistics Canada](#) finds that more than one in five First Nations living off reserve, Metis and Inuit adults report having suicidal thoughts at some point in their lives.

When the groups were examined separately, different factors emerged as associated with suicidal thoughts including drinking, marital status and health conditions.

But when all the groups were combined, residential school experience emerged as a significant association.

The agency analyzed data from the 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey and the 2012 Canadian Community Health Survey for First Nations living off reserve, Metis and Inuit aged 26 to 59 to arrive at their conclusions.

Statistics Canada says the results could inform further research that can be used to guide suicide prevention programs among First Nations, Metis and Inuit.

Previous studies have suggested suicide and self-inflicted injuries are among the leading causes of death for among First Nations, Metis and Inuit.

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/one-in-five-aboriginal-people-has-suicidal-thoughts-at-some-point-statscan-1.2743085>

Inuit among groups at higher risk of suicidal thoughts, says Statistics Canada

Residential school experience, alcoholism, poor health cited as important factors in study

By Sima Sahar Zerehi, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 20, 2016 5:30 AM CT Last Updated: Jan 20, 2016 7:56 AM CT



'If you don't give up and you reach out you could live,' said Johnny Issaluk, an athlete who has won many medals in traditional Inuit games - and grappled with suicidal thoughts. 'You living can make a difference for other people.' (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC)

Nearly a quarter of Inuit have had suicidal thoughts at one point in their lives, according to a [recent Statistics Canada study](#) — a sobering reminder of the reality faced by many Inuit living in Nunavut.

The 2012 study looked at First Nations living off-reserve, Métis and Inuit between the ages of 26 and 59. The research hopes to add data to help combat high suicide rates among Aboriginal peoples in Canada which are much higher than among the non-Aboriginal population.

In Nunavut, [suicide is a territorial crisis that has affected almost every family](#).

"The biggest impact in my life was my mother's suicide," said Johnny Issaluk, an Arctic sports athlete who wrote a book explaining the teaching of traditional Inuit games to elementary school students.

Issaluk's mother died by suicide in 1999, he said, leading him to grapple with suicidal thoughts of his own.

"It was like your feet got cut off," he said. "Some people say it's a cowardice thing. It's not.

'It's one of those things that you're hurting so bad, you're scared so much, you think there's nothing that can fix how you feel."

The Statistics Canada study said members of all three Aboriginal groups were more likely than non-Aboriginals to report suicidal thoughts. Almost 24 per cent of Inuit women reported thoughts of suicide. And more than 25 per cent of First Nations women who live off reserve had these thoughts. That's compared to just over 13 per cent of Non-Aboriginal women in Canada. The numbers were slightly lower across the board, but comparable among men.

Risk factors to suicidal thoughts

Mohan Kumar, a researcher in Statistics Canada's Social and Aboriginal Department, says that there are three main risk factors that precede suicidal thoughts: mood and anxiety disorder, drug use, and reporting low self worth.

The report also pointed to heavy drinking, poor health, and residential school experience as other pertinent factors, as well as being widowed, divorced, or separated.

"There's also a lot of research showing that suicide attempts and suicide completions are almost always preceded by suicidal thoughts," said Kumar.

"If we can understand what are the factors that are associated with suicidal thought that will add to the existing literature which can be used for developing programs to reduce suicides," added Kumar.

If you are grappling with suicide in Nunavut, call the anonymous and confidential Kamatsiaqtut Help Line at (867) 979-3333 or (800) 265-3333.

You can also call the Kids Help Phone at 1-800 668-6868 to speak to a counsellor.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/inuit-suicidal-thoughts-statscan-1.3410915>

First Nations losing 'babies' to suicide, chief says after 10-year-old dies

Suicide rate for children under 15 in some Ontario First Nations more than 50 times the national average

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 20, 2016 7:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jan 20, 2016 5:16 PM ET



Nishnawbe Aski Nation Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler leads the grand entry for a meeting of 49 chiefs from northern Ontario in Thunder Bay, Ont., this week. (Jody Porter/CBC)

First Nations in northern Ontario are calling for emergency relief after several young people, including a 10-year-old girl, died by suicide in recent weeks.

The Northwest Local Health Integration Network report from 2010 showed the suicide rate for some First Nations in the area is 50 times the Canadian average for children under 15 years old.

A meeting of chiefs from the 49 First Nations that make up the Nishnawbe Aski Nation began this week in Thunder Bay, Ont., with prayers for the families of five youth who have died by suicide since December.

"Many of these are young girls and our babies," said Nishnawbe Aski Nation Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, noting that two 10-year-olds have died by suicide in less than two years.

"I can't even imagine what those families and those communities are going through," he said. "To bury a 10-year-old child that died by suicide is something I can't even begin to comprehend."



'Our community is in a state of crisis,' says Neskantaga First Nation Chief Wayne Moonias. (CBC)

Another recent suicide took place in Neskantaga First Nation, one of the Nishnwabe Aski Nation communities, where a 14-year-old girl died on Jan. 9.

"You don't expect a 14-year-old to be lost in that way," said Chief Wayne Moonias. "Nobody expected it and it has been difficult. The community had to pull together."

In the past 10 years, Neskantaga First Nation has lost 13 people to suicide, and few people remain untouched by grief. The girl who died recently is the child of Moonias's cousin and close to his own children, he said.

"Our community is in a state of crisis," Moonias said. "This brings back a lot of flashbacks for our people ... including staff."

Moonias and other chiefs are calling for emergency response to suicides similar to the way governments respond to other disasters such as floods or forest fires.

Chiefs say outside resources, such as mental health workers and crisis co-ordinators, are needed, along with the money to pay them.

Without that help, First Nations can't recover from one suicide before another occurs, Fiddler said.

"That 10-year-girl who committed suicide in Bearskin Lake, she has siblings. I want to make sure that those siblings get the help that they need so they don't [get into] a high-risk situation themselves," he said.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-suicide-ontario-youth-1.3410909>

Aboriginal Chiefs Plead for Help in Canada After Children Commit Suicide

By *Tamara Khandaker*

January 21, 2016 | 8:07 am

First Nations chiefs in Ontario say help is urgently needed from the Canadian government after a staggering five children, including a 10-year-old, committed suicide in recent weeks.

"We've gone through a lot of losses to suicide," said Chief Wayne Moonias of Neskantaga First Nation, a community about 500 miles north of Thunder Bay, where a 14-year-old girl took her own life on January 9.

He spoke with VICE News from a gathering in Thunder Bay, Ont. of the 49 First Nations chiefs that make up Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

The leaders are calling on the federal and provincial governments to establish a special emergency task force to address what they called a "growing suicide epidemic" across their territory.

"It really puts an enormous pressure on a community, especially a small community like ours, where everybody has to put together to try to address and bridge some support services to the family that's in need," said Moonias, whose reserve declared a state of emergency in 2013 after seven youths took their own lives. Neskantaga has also been on a boil water advisory for 20 years.

A spokesperson for the Nishnawbe Aski Nation said that at least five children had committed suicide on their territory since December. A 10-year-old girl committed suicide in Bearskin Lake First Nation, and a 20-year-old woman in Fort Albany First Nation.

According to Northwest Local Health Integration Network report from 2010, the suicide rate for children under 15 in some First Nations communities in the region is 50 times the national average.

The Mushkegowuk Tribal Council, in an attempt to understand the suicide "pandemic" among First Nations youth, launched a "People's Inquiry" in 2013 and held hearings in a number of northern communities. The report was released in December and featured the first-hand stories of 77 people who had been affected by suicide, as well as recommendations and possible solutions.

Their report estimated that about 600 youth had thought about or actually tried to kill themselves between 2009 and 2011.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler [told CBC](#) that two 10-year-olds have died by suicide in less than two years.

"I can't even imagine what those families and those communities are going through," he said. "To bury a 10-year-old child that died by suicide is something I can't even begin to comprehend."

Moonias, who himself was related to the 14-year-old, said the youth suicide crisis continues. The news has left his small community stunned as most, including his own children, were connected to her in some way.

Moonias said communities as tightly-knit as his, where everyone is inevitably impacted by such losses, have no choice but to ask for external help.

"We need grief counseling, we need people that can work with the families that are impacted by these tragic losses, and that's what we need immediately," he said, adding that ongoing crisis support is also crucial, as are short and long-term strategies that address how frequent suicides can be prevented.

A study released on Tuesday by Statistics Canada says one in five Aboriginal people living off reserve have thought about suicide at some point in their lives. The prevalence of suicidal thoughts was higher among women in all Aboriginal groups than non-Aboriginal women. That was also the case for men, except Métis men.

The study covers people between the ages of 26 and 59, and also does not count indigenous people living on reserve. Mood and anxiety disorders, drug use and lack of high self worth were associated with suicidal thoughts, the study found. Heavy drinking and being widowed, divorced or separated were also factors for some groups. In addition, the experience of residential schools — the widely condemned and now abandoned practice of forcibly removing Aboriginal children from their homes and sending them to religious schools for assimilation — was "significantly associated" with suicidal thoughts.

Direct Link: <https://news.vice.com/article/aboriginal-chiefs-plead-for-help-in-canada-after-children-commit-suicide>

Aboriginal History

Sneak peek: aboriginal stories get their due in museum's budding History Hall

DON BUTLER, OTTAWA CITIZEN
[More from Don Butler, Ottawa Citizen](#)

Published on: January 20, 2016 | Last Updated: January 20, 2016 4:19 AM EST

Critics who predicted the Canadian Museum of History would focus on the military and the monarchy in its new \$30-million History Hall may have to eat their words.

Royalty and armaments were conspicuous by their absence during the Citizen's exclusive look this week at the Gatineau museum's 40,000-square-foot future centrepiece, billed as the largest and most ambitious exhibition on Canadian history ever undertaken.

On the other hand, the history of the country's indigenous peoples will occupy a lot of real estate in the three galleries of the History Hall, the replacement for the museum's now-demolished Canada Hall.

The first three "content chunks" that visitors will encounter in the Early Canada gallery, covering the period from the ice age to the British conquest, deal with Canada before the arrival of Europeans, said David Morrison, the museum's research director.

Stories about indigenous history also show up in the other two galleries, including sections on the 19th Century treaties with the Crown, the malign impact of the Indian Act and residential schools, the rise of native activism and First Nations art.

"What we're doing in this hall is integrating aboriginal history into mainstream, ordinary Canadian history," said Morrison. "Aboriginal people have been a vital part of Canadian history since the beginning. Getting them into the narrative is, I think, crucial."

The second gallery, Colonial Canada, covers the period up to the First World War, while the third gallery, Modern Canada — positioned on a wide mezzanine overlooking the other two galleries — brings the narrative to the present day. (It will even include something about the current arrival of Syrian refugees.)

Unlike the Canada Hall, which relied heavily on reproductions, the new History Hall will focus on authentic objects, said president and CEO Mark O'Neill. "We really want to rely on the power of the artifact."

Among them is a cloak worn by Gen. James Wolfe, who died in the pivotal Battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759. The cloak is currently in Buckingham Palace's Royal Collection, but officials there have agreed to provide it to the museum.

Visitors will also see the handcuffs worn by Métis rebellion leader Louis Riel as he ascended the scaffold in 1885. The cuffs have been in the Canadian War Museum's collection for years but have never been displayed publicly.

The only piece of architecture from the old Canada Hall to survive the transition was its sole authentic building — St. Onuphrius Church, a Ukrainian church from Smoky Lake, Alberta, dating from 1907.

Movers raised it and set it onto steel beams, greased with Dove soap, to shift it to its new location, where it will help tell the story of the immigrants who flooded into Canada's empty spaces in the late-19th and early-20th centuries.

The Modern Canada gallery "has proved to be the most difficult space to conceptualize," Morrison said, "because there are so many potential stories and because so much of it is in living memory. But we finally got there in the last three or four months."

The new hall is on schedule and on budget. Construction began last July and is now nearly 60 per cent complete, said Chantal Amyot, the project's director. It's expected to be finished by the end of June, after which the museum will begin installing the content.

Though the History Hall will open officially on July 1, 2017, "the objective is to be ready by the end of March 2017, so we have a bit of time with specialized groups to test," Amyot said.

At present, much of the new hall still resembles a construction site, with a tangle of overhead pipes and heating ducts and unpainted walls on its lower level.

Work on the mezzanine is more advanced. Its wooden floors are in place and the preparation of architect Douglas Cardinal's signature domed ceiling is nearly finished.

A circular central hub, meant by Cardinal to represent the sacred Chaudière Falls, connects the three galleries, offering access to the mezzanine level along a gradually ascending ramp. The ramp's steel frame has already been assembled and is awaiting installation.

When he designed the museum in the 1980s, Cardinal's vision was that the History Hall space would represent the immensity of Canada. But the inspiring vistas he imagined were obscured by the Canada Hall's rather cluttered installations, Amyot said. The new hall, with its curvilinear lines, should finally rectify that, she said.

Morrison wants the stories in the hall to speak to Canadians at a personal level.

"This history is everything, literally," he said. "It isn't just a bunch of bloody dates. It's everybody's family story, it's all around us, it shapes us and we shape it."

Direct Link: <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/sneak-peek-aboriginal-stories-get-their-due-in-museums-budding-history-hall>

Aboriginal Identity & Representation

The Revenant is not an indigenous story

Grandiose frontier epic never escapes colonial gaze of western genre

By Jesse Wentz, [for CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 14, 2016 10:09 PM ET Last Updated: Jan 15, 2016 4:00 PM ET



The *Revenant* stars Leonardo DiCaprio as 19th century explorer Hugh Glass, who was left for dead in the wilderness after a bear attack. Vancouver-based actress Gracey Dove portrays his wife. (Leonardo DiCaprio/Instagram/20th Century Fox)

In Alejandro González Iñárritu's grandiose frontier epic *The Revenant*, Vancouver actor Duane Howard stars as Elk Dog. It's 1823 and the Arikara leader's daughter has been kidnapped by one of the European fur traders who have come to take as many pelts as their horses can carry out of the harsh winter.

The film opens with Elk Dog's war party descending on the traders as they flee in their boat, the precious furs safely on board. Elk Dog may have to forge an uneasy bargain with some of these newcomers in order to find his daughter and get his revenge.

With its obvious dedication to authenticity in its period details and use of First Nations languages, *The Revenant* is well equipped to tell Elk Dog's story, but it only does that on the periphery.

No escape from colonial gaze

The Revenant is not an indigenous story. Like *Dances with Wolves* before it (among many others) it is an American fable that uses First Nations characters to support its allegorical intent, and one that never escapes the colonial gaze of the western genre.



From the movie set: fellow actor Duane Howard, who plays Elk Dog, with Isaiah Tootoosis, who plays the role of Hawk. (Duane Howard)

The focus is on hired scout Hugh Glass (Leonardo DiCaprio), who's been employed along with his Pawnee son Hawk (Forrest Goodluck) to lead the hunters to good pelts and then get them back out safely. After Elk Dog's attack, only a few of Glass' party have survived.

In a mirroring of Elk Dog's story, Glass witnesses his son's murder at the hands of the desperate and dastardly John Fitzgerald (Tom Hardy), and must literally drag himself from a shallow grave to seek his revenge. Later his story intersects again with Elk Dog's, but only after he must survive one ordeal after another, from bear attacks to an avalanche.

Like Kevin Costner's more traditional western, *The Revenant* takes great strides to get period details correct around clothing, language, housing and combat, but does little to elevate the indigenous characters beyond narrative and storytelling devices.

Very loosely based on the novel by Michael Punke, screenwriter Mark L. Smith and Iñárritu have added Elk Dog and Hawk to Glass's story, as well as the character of Glass's wife (she doesn't get a name, and is played by Grace Dove), who only appears in flashbacks.

Endemic issue with westerns

These additions speak to an endemic issue with the western as a genre when it comes to the representation of indigenous people.



Leonardo DiCaprio plays Hugh Glass in *The Revenant*. (Twentieth Century Fox/Associated Press)

As Armando Jose Prats writes in his book *Invisible Natives: Myth and Identity in the American Western*, "For all that it insists on the Indian's virtual absence, however, the Western requires him — not because it needs to depict one more moment in the relentless course of empire, but because the Western functions primarily as a source of national self-identification."

As a story about the indomitable spirit of the American frontier settler First Nations are required as an emblem of the wilderness being settled, as this is central to the colonial myth of "Manifest Destiny."

First Nations have to be present in westerns in order to disappear and for America to be born. Glass, as an embodiment of the America frontiersman, must prevail — thus his ease at adopting indigenous language and his ability to survive events that surely would kill a normal man.

***The Revenant* fails to escape genre**

Iñárritu has compared Glass to a saint, and indeed there is something spiritual about him. He is able to inhabit the skins of several creatures throughout the film, at various times clothed in bear skin or horse hide and embraces indigenous culture, as displayed by his family and bear claw necklace (as one hashtag reads, #DancesWithBears).

In the golden age of the western (1939-1960), representation was rarely an issue for Hollywood, largely because indigenous people were still trapped in the throes of genocide, with residential schools and restrictive laws still in place throughout North America.

There was no resistance to be offered to these images, and the First Nations involved on screen had little influence on their own depiction.

The social justice movements of the 1960s forever saw a drastic reduction in the production of westerns, as cultural tastes and politics shifted away from the depictions of previous generations.

In the 1980s, westerns almost ceased to exist, and those that were made mostly omitted First Nations. *Dances With Wolves* brought westerns back, if they ever truly went away, and imbued them with progressive strides in authenticity, but have still not solved issues of indigenous representation on screen.

A film about Elk Dog would be a major step in the right direction. A film about Hugh Glass, no matter how immaculately produced, is unable to escape the constraints of the genre it honours.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/the-revenant-not-an-indigenous-story-1.3404007>

Paul Seesequasis: Images like Whitesboro's official seal dehumanize indigenous peoples



An archival image titled In profile (Cree) ~ Waskaganish, Quebec 1926 alongside the current official emblem of Whitesboro, N.Y. (L.T. Burwash/Supplied)

Sunday January 17, 2016

Thanks to mascots on sports jerseys, headdresses on lingerie models and offensive language in clothing lines, the issue of indigenous representation comes up again and again.

The town of Whitesboro, N.Y., has now made international headlines for its official seal. The round emblem features a cartoon-like picture of two men: a white man who appears to be strangling an indigenous man, who is leaning back with his mouth hanging open.

According to Whitesboro officials, the emblem dates back to the early 1900s and depicts a wrestling match between village founder Hugh White and an Oneida man. White won the match and, as the story goes, the lasting respect and goodwill of the Oneida People.

Despite the historical roots of the image, many people have found it offensive and a petition was started to change it. Recently, the town of Whitesboro voted overwhelmingly to keep it.



Paul Seesequasis, is optimistic that perceptions are changing. (Supplied)

"For me it just reveals the lack of awareness, a completely ahistorical view of the relationship between, in this case, Oneida and settlers," said Saskatoon-based writer and editor Paul Seesequasis.

Besides being historically inaccurate, he said, images such as the Whitesboro seal further dehumanize indigenous peoples because while Hugh White is named, the Oneida man is not.

Seesequasis is very familiar with images and representation of First Nations people. Every day for almost two years, he has been sharing archival images of indigenous people doing everyday things on his [social media accounts](#).



Girl fishing on the Skeena (Gitxsan) ~ Kitwanga, B.C. 1915 (James Topley)

"A lot of them are just people living in everyday clothes in everyday life," Seesequasis said. "I kind of avoided those types photos where it's obvious the photographer came into the community with a suitcase full of props to put on people to fit his or her idea of what an Indian should look like."

Seesequasis began the project almost two years ago to change perceptions and to spread awareness about Canada's historical relationship with indigenous peoples.

"I also was seeing kind of a lack of positive imagery that was historical, that showed the strength and resilience of our communities," he said.

Seesequasis said while many of the images he posts are in public archives, a lot of the subjects in the photos are not named. A surprising outcome of posting the photos has been that it has become a kind of naming ceremony, with people messaging him to say they recognize a great-grandfather or grandmother, aunties or uncles in the images.

"To me it's a part of reconciliation, part of reclamation of the character of these people and how they are because they should be named,' he said.



A welcome sign on the village green in Whitesboro, N.Y., displays the village seal. (Observer-Dispatch/AP)

Seesequasis is optimistic that perceptions are changing, saying more and more sports teams are changing their logos and names.

"[It's] disappointing when you see something like Whitesboro, but we also have to look at the positives and where activism and people speaking out, native and non-native, has brought about change."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/from-star-wars-to-stargazing-1.3402216/paul-seesequasis-images-like-whitesboro-s-official-seal-dehumanize-indigenous-peoples-1.3404450>

Indspire Awards recognizing accomplishments of Indigenous people coming to Vancouver

By Willow Fiddler Global News, January 18, 2016 1:38 pm



Three Youth Award recipients at the 2013 Indspire Awards.

Indspire, Facebook

Award-winning author Joseph Boyden and Montreal Canadiens goalie Carey Price are set to receive Indspire Awards at the prestigious annual gala event being held in Vancouver next month.

“The 2016 Indspire Awards recipients personify the successes Indigenous people have achieved and the significant impact we have made in all areas of life in Canada,” said Roberta L. Jamieson, president and CEO of Indspire and executive producer of the Indspire Awards.

Four Indigenous Canadians from B.C. are being recognized with Indspire Awards, including Price who is from the Ulkatcho First Nation in Anahim, B.C.

Price has garnered praise and support from Indigenous people around the country for being a positive and engaging role model for First Nations youth.

A [video released](#) by the Air Canada Foundation and Breakfast Club of Canada last year highlights a young Ulkatcho First Nations boy traveling to Montreal to spend the day with the Hart Trophy winner.

When he accepted the Vezina Trophy last June in Las Vegas, Price used the opportunity to encourage First Nations youth to become leaders.

WATCH: Carey Price encourages First Nations youth in Vezina Trophy acceptance speech



Also among the Indspire Award recipients from British Columbia is Chief Robert Joseph from Gwawaaenuk First Nation who will be presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award, Mark Stevenson and Leonard George.

The Indspire Awards are touted to be highest honour bestowed on Indigenous people and have been recognizing the success of Indigenous Canadians for 23 years.

Past Indspire Award recipients include NHL star Gino Odjick, former National Chief of Assembly of First Nations Shawn A-in-chut Atleo, accomplished actor Adam Beach, and world renowned woodland artist Norval Morrisseau.

The gala event takes place on Feb. 12 at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre in Vancouver and will be broadcast by Global Television and Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) at a later date.

The complete list of 2016 Indspire Award recipients can be seen [here](#).

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2461199/indspire-awards-recognizing-accomplishments-of-indigenous-people-coming-to-vancouver/>

Bittersweet honour for SayITFirst for First Nations language tool

THE CHRONICLE HERALD

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First Nations language tool fills void

It's with mixed feelings that Halifax resident Mike Parkhill will be invested into the Order of Ontario for his **SayITFirst Inc.** aboriginal-language venture.

"Reading a book to our children in our own language is seen as a basic human right by many," the entrepreneur said Tuesday as he prepared for his Wednesday investiture.

He said he is thrilled to receive the recognition but saddened that so many aboriginal people were denied the basic freedom of reading their own stories to their children.

"I was initially shocked when I couldn't find books in native languages," Parkhill said of his decision to start writing and illustrating his own books for aboriginal children and their parents.

That decision, following his departure from a senior position at **Microsoft Canada** in 2009, led to the founding of SayITFirst.

Parkhill said the books gained in popularity as they provided teachers, parents and children with the ability to read the words out loud in their native language.

He said he recently relocated to Halifax and is in the process of registering the business in Nova Scotia.

Online videos now complement a number of the books as well to help with pronunciation.

Parkhill's project led to links with First Nations communities and elders keen to generate some excitement about Canada's native languages through the use of digital learning technologies.

"Studies show that building self-identity at an early age can proactively protect against teenage suicides, truancy, gang activity and substance abuse," said a news release from SayITFirst.

Parkhill is to be invested along with some other innovators during a ceremony Wednesday at Queen's Park.

"These 25 accomplished individuals inspire us," said a news release from Elizabeth Dowdeswell, lieutenant-governor of Ontario.

"From breaking ground in advances in health care, to speaking out for those who cannot speak for themselves, to nourishing our souls through art and music, they have served this province with dedication and generosity. To them we are grateful."

For more information about SayITFirst, visit the website at www.sayitfirst.ca or contact Parkhill at mikepark@sayitfirst.ca, or join the language revitalization conversation on Facebook.

Direct Link: <http://thechronicleherald.ca/business/1335578-bittersweet-honour-for-sayitfirst-for-first-nations-language-tool>

Aboriginal Jobs & Labour

NowNS: First Nations offer economic hope

JOHN DEMONT SENIOR WRITER

Published January 18, 2016 - 9:17pm

Last Updated January 18, 2016 - 9:27pm

Lower median age of Mi'kmaq population contributes to employment upswing



Drummer Austin Christmas leads a family violence prevention march in Membertou last winter. The welder started his own plumbing business, which now has three employees. (STAFF / File)

This article is part of The Chronicle Herald's Now! Nova Scotia series, which examines — in the wake of the [Ivany report](#) — the challenges and opportunities faced by our province in today's economy.

Like many of us, Austin Christmas followed the smell of money to the Alberta oilpatch.

And like so many Nova Scotians, the journeyman welder quickly grew weary of the whole thing — the endless travel back and forth from his home in the Mi'kmaq First Nation community of Membertou, the heart-breaking goodbyes to his two children and all the other woeful aspects of the life of the long commute.

So after six years, he gave it up, even though it meant he had to find a new way to make a living.

Fortunately, he had a plan. Before getting his welder's papers, he'd spent some time in the pipe trades, ensuring that he already qualified for the first stage in his apprenticeship as a plumber, which he completed in the months that followed at Nova Scotia Community College's Sydney campus.

"The first years in any business are hard," says Christmas, 40.

But with three employees, his plumbing business may be over the hump.

From its start eight years ago, Austin Christmas Plumbing and Heating got plenty of work in vibrant Membertou. Now, after depending entirely on customers at home, some 30 per cent of his business is from off-reserve customers, a number he expects to grow.

All of which makes him exactly the kind of person Ray Ivany's Now Or Never report on the future of the Nova Scotia economy had in mind when it talked about reducing the wide gap between the unemployment rate for First Nations and African-Nova Scotian residents and everyone else in the province.

There's another reason why the success of folks like Christmas is good news. The population of Nova Scotia, as we all know, is aging faster than just about anywhere in the country.

First Nations communities in Nova Scotia, on the other hand, are experiencing the same baby boom as reserves elsewhere in Canada.

The upshot: The median age of the First Nations population in Nova Scotia is 25.4 years, compared with 41.6 for the population of the province as a whole.

There, at least in part, seems to be an answer to the province's aging demographic.

The corollary is also true: If they're going to stay around, these young people need to find meaningful, decently compensated work.

There is the challenge. Official sources put the unemployment rate for people living on reserve at about 25 per cent, and some 15 per cent for aboriginal Nova Scotians no matter where in the province they live.

That's far too rosy a picture, according to Robert Bernard, president of Diversity Management Group, a Mi'kmaq consulting group in Cape Breton's We'koqma'q First Nation. He puts the First Nations unemployment rate in some communities as high as 75 per cent. The frightening thing is it used to be worse.

He means back in the days before the federal government launched a growing list of inclusion initiatives, and First Nations like Membertou, which boasts a convention centre, as well as its own insurance and fishing companies, and Millbrook, to a lesser degree, became employment powerhouses.

The situation was driven home to him 18 years ago when he was hired to get more aboriginal workers involved in the Sable natural gas project.

"We were way behind in terms of training and qualifications. We realized that right away," says Bernard.

It didn't help that some of the bigger companies he was dealing with placed a higher priority on creating an efficient project than bettering the community's employment prospects.

Things have changed enough that the Ulnooweg Development Group Inc., which provides loans and business services to First Nations entrepreneurs, lists 70 Nova Scotia companies on its Atlantic aboriginal business directory.

Barry Stevens, who has a high-tech consulting firm in Chester, says First Nations companies are judged the same as any other small business: "On value."

Everybody agrees there's a long way to go until First Nations businesses can hire all the young flooding onto the job market in their communities, let alone bring expatriates back home.

Christmas says what's most needed is a change in attitude. He says non-natives will, by and large, now hire whoever can do the work.

"We need to create more of an awareness that there are opportunities away from the community, and you don't have to leave your community to go and get them."

For Bernard, it's all about the basics: educating and training the young so they can do the jobs of the future, and creating a structure that ensures the funding dollars and jobs flow beyond band-owned enterprises to small businesses.

Stevens would like to see more development for aboriginal businesses so they can insert themselves into the supply chains on big projects like the Irving frigate program in Halifax.

They can do the work, he says, they just need to get in the door.

Direct Link: <http://thechronicleherald.ca/business/1334831-nowns-first-nations-offer-economic-hope>

Aboriginal Politics

Doug Cuthand: Wall plays politics on First Nations issues

DOUG CUTHAND, SASKATOON STARPHOENIX

[More from Doug Cuthand, Saskatoon StarPhoenix](#)

Published on: January 16, 2016 | Last Updated: January 16, 2016 5:26 AM CST



Premier Brad Wall may be appealing to party's political base.

There's a rule in politics that if you deny something there's a good chance you are guilty.

Richard Nixon's statement in defence of the Watergate break-in that, "I'm not a crook," and Bill Clinton's remark, "I did not have sex with that woman," stand out as two revealing examples.

Premier Brad Wall came out recently and stated that his government was not "bullying First Nations." The case in question involves hunting by First Nations people within the province's borders.

Chief Charlie Boucher and his cousin, George Lamirande, from the Pine Creek First Nation in Manitoba had shot a moose in Saskatchewan and taken it back to their reserve, located on the western shore of Lake Winnipegosis. The chief told APTN News that the moose was shot on Crown land. Boucher said they were hunting in their traditional territory and within Treaty 4 territory.

Treaty 4 was signed in 1874, and a large swath of its territory lies in both Saskatchewan and Manitoba and predates the border between the two provinces. Saskatchewan's aboriginal hunter's guide lists all the First Nations within Treaty 4, including Pine Creek. The guide states all Treaty 4 First Nations are allowed to hunt in Saskatchewan.

"Those wishing to exercise the treaty right to hunt, fish and trap for food in Saskatchewan must be a registered Indian as defined by the Government of Canada's Indian Act and carry a valid Certificate of Indian Status, which identifies membership in one of the First Nations listed in this guide, regardless of their present province of residence," according to the guide.

So what is the issue here? The RCMP arrived at Chief Boucher's home on Dec. 15 armed with a search warrant on behalf of Saskatchewan Conservation officers. They came in multiple vehicles and had a K-9 unit. The object of the search was that the accused had illegally transported meat across a provincial boundary.

The search was conducted, meat and firearms were seized, and DNA samples of the moose taken. The investigation continues, and so far no charges have been laid.

This case is interesting because it involves treaty rights, resource harvesting, and First Nations' jurisdiction. Premier Wall jumped into the fray by saying that provincial jurisdiction trumped treaty rights. This statement is totally erroneous, but it makes good fodder for solidifying the rural vote in the upcoming election.

Rather than sit down to discuss meaningful solutions and recognize our rights, the provinces and federal government have stalled progress by continually taking such cases to court. This only delays the inevitable. If they proceed with charges against the Pine Creek residents, the province are most likely to lose, but the court hearing will take place long after the election.

Later in the week Premier Wall jumped into another dispute, and again only made things worse. The inmates at the Regina Provincial Correctional Centre refused to eat the slop that the jail was providing. Wall provided a smart aleck remark that the food was just fine. He went on to further state that if you don't like prison food, then don't go to prison.

What he failed to mention is that the majority of the inmates are on remand and have not been tried in a court of law. According to the presumption of innocence until one is proven guilty, Wall jumped a few steps presuming their guilt.

Remand is the modern day equivalent of a debtor's prison. If you have money and can hire a lawyer or raise bail, then you don't have to wait in a jail cell for your trial date. If you are among the many aboriginal inmates who have few financial resources, you can then expect to sit in a cell for a year or more until you have your day in court.

Wall's actions leave me thinking that he is using the old Harper government trick of dividing people against each other and ignoring the aboriginal vote in favour of his base.

Maybe it does make for good politics in Saskatchewan to bully First Nations people.

Direct Link: <http://thestarphoenix.com/opinion/columnists/0115-edit-cuthand-col>

Life support offered to Metis Nation- Saskatchewan

BETTY ANN ADAM, SASKATOON STARPHOENIX

More from Betty Ann Adam, Saskatoon StarPhoenix

Published on: January 19, 2016 | Last Updated: January 19, 2016 9:48 PM CST



Gerald Morin, vice president of the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan.

The federal government has stepped in to get the Metis Nation-Saskatchewan (MNS) back on its feet.

A third party manager will be brought in to keep the organization's head office on "life support" until a federally funded MNS election can be held later this year, vice-president Gerald Morin said Tuesday.

"I'm very happy about it ... This is going to ensure the long-term survival and whatever, prosperity. The Metis Nation will be around for a long time to come yet," Morin said.

"This will be a road map to take us to a legislative assembly, ultimately to an election and whoever is elected will provide that leadership and move on and represent our people in Saskatchewan like we have for so many years.

"There's unanimity in supporting the plan," he said.

A spokesperson for Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada confirmed the arrangement Tuesday.

"The Government of Canada has been working with the leadership of the Metis Nation-Saskatchewan to support the organization in overcoming its current challenges and reaffirming its role in representing the interests of the Metis people of Saskatchewan," an email from spokeswoman Michelle Perron confirmed.

“On Jan. 16, departmental officials met in Saskatoon with leadership of the MN-S, including president Robert Doucette, vice-president Gerald Morin and members of the Provincial Metis Council, to discuss a proposal for resuming a funding relationship,” she said.

“Following this meeting, the department is continuing to work with MN-S leadership on implementation of a funding agreement based on the Jan. 16 discussions,” Perron said.

The MN-S lost its funding in November 2014 after failing to hold constitutionally required, provincewide legislative assemblies for five years.

The third party manager, who has not yet been contracted, will pay rent that is in arrears at the MN-S head office and back up critical computer files, including a registry of tens of thousands of Metis citizens, Morin said.

The government will fund up to three meetings of the Provincial Metis Council by the end of March to set up a legislative assembly, which will set a date for an election, Morin said.

Funding will be restored and operations will resume once the election is complete, he said.

President Robert Doucette did not immediately return an interview request.

Direct Link: <http://thestarphoenix.com/news/saskatchewan/life-support-offered-to-metis-nation-saskatchewan>

Senator Patrick Brazeau in critical but stable condition in Gatineau hospital

Brazeau found in his home Monday night with serious injuries, sources say

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 19, 2016 8:45 AM ET Last Updated: Jan 19, 2016 12:12 PM ET



Senator Patrick Brazeau is currently on a leave of absence with pay from the Senate. (Sean Kilpatrick/Canadian Press)

Senator Patrick Brazeau is recovering in hospital following surgery after he was found seriously injured in his home last night, according to officials at a hospital in Gatineau, Que.

Police and paramedics were called to Brazeau's home in Mayo, Que., northeast of Ottawa, just after 10 p.m. ET on Monday, sources told CBC News.

He was taken to hospital in Buckingham, Que., and was later transferred to a hospital in Gatineau, Que.

There is no criminal investigation, according to Quebec provincial police.

Trial on Senate expenses upcoming

The Hull hospital released a statement late Tuesday morning confirming Brazeau arrived at 1 a.m. ET and underwent successful surgery.

He is in critical but stable condition, but his injuries are not life threatening, the statement added.

Brazeau is currently on a leave of absence from the Senate with pay, though his salary is being clawed back to repay nearly \$50,000 in disallowed housing expense claims.

He faces a criminal trial for fraud and breach of trust arising from his Senate expenses. The trial is scheduled to start in March.

Suspended in 2013

Brazeau was kicked out of the Tory caucus in February 2013 after he was arrested and charged with assault and sexual assault related to an incident at a Gatineau residence that same month.

He was suspended from the upper chamber in November 2013.

In April 2014, Brazeau was charged with assault, possession of cocaine, uttering threats and breaching bail conditions following an altercation involving a man and a woman at a home in Gatineau.

In October 2015, [Brazeau was granted an absolute discharge](#) after pleading guilty to the assault and cocaine charges, avoiding both jail time and a criminal record.

He had earlier [pleaded guilty to the reduced charges of assault and possession of cocaine](#) after the more serious charge of sexual assault was dropped due to a lack of evidence.

Brazeau's suspension from the Senate without pay was lifted when Parliament was dissolved for the 2015 federal election.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/patrick-brazeau-injured-mayo-quebec-1.3409877>

Manitoba Liberals promise to tackle First Nations housing crisis if elected

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 18, 2016 1:21 PM CT Last Updated: Jan 18, 2016 1:21 PM CT



In one home on the Wasagamack First Nation in Manitoba, the washroom consists of a slop pail placed under a toilet seat. The silver bowl is used as a sink. (Karen Pauls/CBC)

The Manitoba Liberal Party is promising to invest at least \$15 million annually to begin addressing the housing crisis on northern Manitoba First Nations.

If elected in April 2016, the Liberals will begin with that amount of funding and invest more as resources become available, stated a news release issued by the party on Monday.

"We recognize this is federal jurisdiction and welcome the federal government to the table but are prepared to start without them. We cannot accept Third World conditions in Manitoba," party leader Rana Bokhari is quoted as saying.

"Who is responsible is an old and tired argument, and those who want to have it are welcome to it. Our party is a party of action, and it's well past time to address this issue."

The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs says there is a shortage of more than 17,000 homes on the province's reserves, which means overcrowding is a major problem. Many homes don't have running water.

Thousands more on-reserve homes need to be replaced because of mould and other problems.

"We know the federal government will be making infrastructure announcements soon and look forward to working with them on aboriginal housing initiatives," the Liberal release states.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/first-nations-housing-manitoba-liberals-1.3408806>

Aboriginal Sports

Lakehead University athletes share passion for sport with First Nations kids

Hockey, basketball, volleyball, wrestling, cross-country ski, and track & field team members host clinics

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 21, 2016 9:44 AM ET Last Updated: Jan 21, 2016 10:45 AM ET



Natasha Frank, a third-year nursing student at Lakehead University and member of the track and cross-country teams, is taking part of the Reach Up! program, which reaches out to First Nations youth. (Cathy Alex/CBC)

Lakehead University and Wasaya Airways are teaming up for a program that brings student athletes to remote First Nations communities.

University president Brian Stevenson said the athletes host sports clinics and act as mentors to local coaches and young people — but the "Reach Up!" program can also be a transformative experience for the varsity athletes.



Lakehead University president Brian Stevenson says the Reach Up! program can be a transformative experience for varsity athletes. (Cathy Alex/CBC)

"They experience the warmth and the welcome of the communities. They talk to the children," he said.

"So when they came back, they came and told us that this was a great experience for them, even though they went up to try to talk about Lakehead and about athletic issues."

Another goal of the program is to encourage young people to continue their studies at Lakehead University, Stevenson said.

'Opportunity for hope'

The president and CEO of Wasaya Airways said the program is a great opportunity for the young people in First Nations communities.

"We are 100 per cent owned by 13 First Nations communities and this gives

[them a chance] ... to experience a senior level of athletics that they would otherwise not be able to see," Michael Rodyniuk said.



Michael Rodyniuk, president and CEO of Wasaya Airways, says the Reach Up! program offers First Nations youth the chance to get active in sports. (Cathy Alex/CBC)

"It also provides them with some opportunity for hope, and something that they can achieve and work towards. Excellence in a certain sport, of which Lakehead University offers a tremendous variety."

Natasha Frank, a third year nursing student at Lakehead, and a member of track and cross-country running teams, participated in the "Reach Up!" program.

"This program is very important in engaging young people to participate in organized sports," she said.

She told CBC News she didn't get much exposure to organized sport until she was about 12, when she moved from her First Nation to Thunder Bay.

"If I wasn't engaged at that time by an LU athlete, coincidentally in Thunder Bay, telling me I was good at doing push-ups, I probably wouldn't have pursued sport," Frank said.

"So imagine what it's like for children in northern communities, and an athlete comes to them and says 'Hey, you're really fast. Hey, you're really good at this. Hey, you're really good at wrestling.' That has a huge impact on them, for their future and to spark that fire in them to go after their dreams."



The Reach Up! program introduces children in remote First Nations communities to the idea of pursuing their sports and education dreams. A partnership between Lakehead University and Wasaya Airways, mentors encourage kids to dream big and perhaps have "another Jordin Tootoo come from one of our communities." Tootoo plays for the NHL's New Jersey Devils. (AP Photo/Duane Burleson)

The program is a very valuable experience for the student athlete, Frank continued.

"A lot of the people I talk to after, they are so surprised that we're so close to communities that are so secluded and have very little. That's just mind boggling for a lot of people, especially if you're from southern Ontario and there's towns everywhere and it's no big problem to get groceries."

Providing these budding athletes with opportunity is key, Rodyniuk added.

"So for our young people in the communities, it provides them an opportunity to participate, get active and, at the same time, who knows, we could have another [\[NHL player like\] Jordin Tootoo](#) come from one of our communities," he said.

The program will visit four communities this year. Nibinamik First Nation has already confirmed its participation.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/reach-up-first-nations-sports-1.3413175>

Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources

Picking apart the sordid back-story of Nunavik's first mine

Masters student gathers tales of Asbestos Hill from families, former workers

SARAH ROGERS, January 15, 2016 - 7:00 am



This early 1970s photo shows Asbestos Hill mine site in operation during Nunavik's summer months. (PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MUSÉE MINÉROLOGIQUE ET MINIER DE THETFORD MINES)



Tailing ponds at the site of the former Asbestos Hill mine, southwest of Salluit, pictured in 2014. (PHOTO BY PETER JOHNSTON)

Across a sprawling stretch of tundra south of Nunavik's Hudson Strait sit the gravel-like remains of the region's first-ever mine site, Asbestos Hill or Putunig in Inuttitut, which operated from 1972 to 1984.

For a project that shut down more than 30 years ago, the mine's mountainous tailings ponds have left a noticeable impact on the land and on the Inuit who live in the region, most of them from the nearby communities of Kangiqsujaq and Salluit.

Yet what the mine has left behind has also become an integral part of the landscape and life in Nunavik, for better or for worse.

And, although an increasing amount of research focuses on the social impacts of mining on Arctic communities, graduate student Jeanette Carney noted that little had been documented on the impacts of Nunavik's first mine — second in the Canadian Arctic, after the Rankin Inlet nickel mine.

So Carney, a masters degree student at Memorial University in St. John's, Nfld., set about interviewing former Asbestos Hill workers and their families, many of whom now

work at the two mines currently operating in Nunavik, the Raglan and Nunavik Nickel mines.

And what she's discovered so far — she has yet to write her thesis — is a legacy with many sore points, but which has led to better conditions for Inuit in today's mining industry.

That's where Asbestos Hill has made a real social impact, Carney discovered, through her research: the mine inspired the types of regulations and agreements that are now in place to help Inuit benefit from the mining industry.

When Carney spent the summer of 2015 in Kangiqsujaq and Salluit, she met a number of former Asbestos Hill workers, all of them men, who in the late 1960s and early 1970s, were freshly graduated from residential schools in the region and looking for work.

Into the 1970s, most of the workers at Asbestos Hill were recruited by family or friends who were already working at the mine.

Encouraged by his father, Salluit's Kakkiniq Naluiyuk left residential school early to work at Asbestos Hill.

"That was my first job that I had," he told Carney in a series of recordings made last summer. "I was only 17.

"When I got there, they told me I had to get up early in the morning," he said. "No choice about that. My first job was washing dishes."

For the most part, Inuit employees were labourers when they started, Carney said, and eventually worked their way into more skilled positions, as tradespeople and heavy equipment operators.

Much like current-day mining operations in Nunavut and Nunavik, the company that operated Asbestos Hill, Société Asbestos Ltd., offered on-site training.

Carney documented one story about an Inuk employee sent to British Columbia for training as a mechanic, but she said all the other Inuit she interviewed learned their skills on-site, by watching more skilled employees at work, mostly Quebecers from the Thetford Mines area, known for its huge asbestos mine complex.

"That was helpful when they went back to their communities [where they could] work in those fields," Carney said.

It's not clear how many Inuit were employed at Asbestos Hill over the mine's lifetime. Carney was never able to track down those employment records.

Informed by her research, she believes the mine's workforce peaked at about 480 employees in the 1970s, but only a small number were Inuit.

Inuit staff worked long and hard hours, recalled Willie Keatainak, who worked at both Asbestos Hill and later at the Raglan mine.

Employees typically worked three months on and one month off — a major shift from the more common two week rotation seen at northern mines today.

Often, Inuit employees chose to stay on at the mine for six months at a time, Keatainak told Carney during an interview.

“It helped us make a lot of money,” Keatainak said, adding he passed a lot of his earnings on to his mother and family.

“We have large families so [it meant that we] could buy a couple of skidoos.”

Many former staffers also recalled the entertainment available to them at the mine site, theatre and dances they wouldn't have access to in their own communities.

“We were able to have a beer and dance,” Jimmy Angutigirk of Salluit told Carney. “We didn't get drunk, but after working long hours, a couple cans of beer...”

While those events might have given workers a chance to let loose after long days of work, the bar at Asbestos Hill was a major source of alcohol to Inuit in the nearby communities.

Some In Salluit, who didn't even work at Asbestos Hill, would go buy alcohol, and sometimes drugs from the mine site, residents said.

“Even when the bar was closed, I heard there was always alcohol, gambling and some prostitution — they even sent prostitutes to the mine,” Aloupa Kulula told Carney. Kulula used to work at Raglan mine; his father was employed at Asbestos Hill.

“At Raglan mine, that's not allowed,” Kulula said, “it's just work, work, work, no social life.”

Yaaka Yaaka of Kangiqsujuaq called drug dealing the asbestos mine's “second biggest field of profits.”

“And that became pretty bad towards the end,” he told Carney. “It became pretty clear the mining operation was mired in corruption.”

Carney heard unconfirmed stories through her interviews that the Montreal-based Italian mafia had connections with the mine site and affiliates used to deal drugs to staff there.

But worse for many Nunavimmiut were the health and environmental concerns they had about the mine site. That's because little was known at the time about the dangers of inhaling asbestos fibres.

Yaaka recalled workers using shovels to pick up processed asbestos, and although they were masked, they were covered in asbestos dust all day.

Carney said some families of former workers, who have since died of cancer, fear their deaths may have been related to asbestos exposure, but no formal link has been established.

When the mine finally closed in 1984, most of the workers had already quit, many of them to marry and start families, Carney said.

A decade later Asbestos Hill's infrastructure still dotted the tundra. The site was finally remediated in the mid-1990s through an agreement struck by the mine's former owners and Falconbridge Ltd., then owners of the Raglan project.

At the same time, Raglan's owner has negotiated and signed the first impacts and benefits agreement with Nunavik Inuit for the nickel mine, which went into operation in 1998.

Carney is now in the process of writing her thesis, which should be done by June 2016.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674picking_apart_the_sordid_back-story_of_nunaviks_first_mine/

Activists claim they shut down Kinder Morgan pipeline work Sunday

However, company says no work was planned for the day

VANCOUVER SUN JANUARY 17, 2016



Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain Pipeline delivers bitumen to a loading dock in Burnaby.

Photograph by: JONATHAN HAYWARD , THE CANADIAN PRESS

VANCOUVER — Activists claimed they stopped geotechnical work being done Sunday in Burrard Inlet by Kinder Morgan.

But the company said no work was planned Sunday, the barge contracting crew remained in control of the vessel and they were monitoring the pair who kayaked to the barge containing drilling equipment.

The activists claimed their actions were intended to stop any drilling, related to planning a proposed expansion of Westridge marine terminal tanker docks to support Kinder Morgan's proposed \$6.8-billion Trans Mountain pipeline expansion.

Organizers said one protester was Wei-Wai-Kay Hereditary Chief Geh-Soh-Giliach, a First Nation based on Quadra Island, while the other was not aboriginal.

Kinder Morgan spokeswoman Ali Hounsell said on Sunday afternoon the pair were sitting on the bumper of the barge, a section at the edge of the barge, and had handed a letter to the crew. "It's too early to speculate as to whether they will stay or whether even their presence would impact the operations at all," said Hounsell.

The activists claim their actions came with approval of Tsleil-Waututh and Wei-Wai-Kay hereditary chiefs, according to a news release.

But Ruben George of the Tsleil-Waututh, who manages the First Nation's program to oppose the Trans Mountain expansion, said the protest at the barge was not sanctioned by the Tsleil-Waututh. He said the first he heard of the protest was when he learned of it from the media.

Hounsell, the Kinder Morgan spokeswoman, said the drilling work off Burnaby had started in December and was scheduled to be complete by the end of February. She said they have permits for the work from Port Metro Vancouver and had notified neighbours in Burnaby of the work.

In a new release, the activists said Kinder Morgan had not taken the necessary consultation with hereditary chiefs and they were infringing on the sovereignty of indigenous people of the unceded lands and waters in Coast Salish territory.

Direct Link:

http://www.vancouversun.com/first+nations+claims+shut+down+pipeline+work+burrard+inlet/11658149/story.html?_lsa=ebcb-d65a

First Nations in northern B.C. have concerns with oil refinery proposal supplied by rail

Pacific Future Energy submits project application for \$15-billion green, high-tech project

BY GORDON HOEKSTRA, VANCOUVER SUN JANUARY 19, 2016



Carrier Sekani Tribal Council chair Terry Teegee: 'Regardless whether you are refining oil in B.C., Alberta or China, you are still dealing with the issue of climate change.'

Photograph by: Hand-out , CARRIER SEKANI TRIBAL COUNCIL

First Nations in northern B.C. say a \$15-billion oil refinery proposal that is meant to address their environmental concerns will face significant questions, including how the project will affect climate change.

Pacific Future Energy, a B.C.-based company that has the backing of engineering-giant SNC Lavalin and former national chief of the Assembly of First Nations Shawn Atleo, submitted a 120-page project description last week to B.C. and federal regulators intended to kick off a review of the proposal.

The company is trying to head off opposition that earlier plans to transport crude from Alberta oilsands to new markets in Asia — including Enbridge's stalled \$7.9-billion Northern Gateway project — have faced from B.C. First Nations.

To do that, the company is proposing to transport oil in rail cars, three or four trains daily of 120 cars each. The idea is that any spill from a rail car — where the oil is the consistency of peanut butter stored in a refrigerator — would be easier to clean up than a spill of crude oil from a pipeline that has been thinned with condensate.

The oil would be refined in northwest B.C. to ship products such as diesel, gasoline and kerosene, which would cause less damage in an ocean spill.

"Regardless whether you are refining oil in B.C., Alberta or China, you are still dealing with the issue of climate change," Carrier Sekani Tribal Council chair Terry Teegee said Sunday.

He said First Nations also have concerns about the general environmental affects of expanding Alberta oilsands production.

The Carrier Sekani council represents eight First Nations in north-central B.C., including a large swath of traditional territory traversed by the CN Rail line that would feed the refinery, which would be built on land between Terrace and Kitimat.

Babine Lake Nation chief Wilf Adam said his people would be opposed to the project as they consider rail transport of oil worse than a pipeline. The Babine Lake Nation is not part of the Carrier Sekani council.

The B.C. Ministry of Environment and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency said they are reviewing Pacific Future Energy's project description. If it is found complete, the project will be brought into their respective environmental assessment processes.

The project also contemplates building an 120-kilometre dual pipeline north of the refinery to the Portland Canal, where tankers would be loaded.

The company says construction could start in 2018, with start-up of the refinery in 2021.

In an interview, Pacific Future Energy executive chairman Samer Salameh said the company's philosophy is to first consult with First Nations.

"If they are not comfortable, we will go somewhere else," said Salameh.

A key component of the project is the fact it will produce only three per cent of the 14 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions of a plant using older technology, said Salameh.

It will cost \$2 billion more to build the lower-emission refinery, but it is a worthwhile investment, he said.

The proposed project would refine 200,000 barrels of oil a day and create about 3,500 jobs during construction. The refinery would have a permanent workforce of about 1,000.

Community newspaper owner David Black also has an oil refinery proposal for a similar location in northwest B.C.

Another refinery proposal by Eagle Spirit Energy, which would be built in either B.C. or Alberta, has support from the Aquilini family, owners of the Vancouver Canucks.

However, oil refinery proposals have been met with skepticism by energy experts who say there is little industry appetite for building multi-billion-dollar projects prone to cost overruns, and because Asia is more interested in bitumen than in synthetic crude or wholly refined products such as diesel.

Read

more:<http://www.vancouversun.com/business/first+nations+northern+have+concerns+with+refinery+proposal+supplied+rail/11660516/story.html#ixzz3xje6wPQP>

Aboriginals, environmentalists rally outside Trans Mountain hearings

by THE CANADIAN PRESS

Posted Jan 19, 2016 1:10 pm PST



Jamie Antone, 9, of the Squamish First Nation, holds a sign as protesters gather outside National Energy Board hearings on the proposed Trans Mountain pipeline expansion in Burnaby, B.C., on Tuesday January 19, 2016. The proposed \$5-billion expansion would nearly triple the capacity of the pipeline that carries crude oil from near Edmonton to the Vancouver area to be loaded on tankers and shipped overseas. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Darryl Dyck

BURNABY – First Nations and environmentalists called on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to stop a National Energy Board review of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion as hearings on the proposal began today.

Opponents of Kinder Morgan's US\$5.4 billion plan to triple the current capacity of the Alberta-to-BC pipeline held a rally outside the hearings in Burnaby. Speakers demanded Trudeau immediately stop the hearings and overhaul the review process.

"This is a fundamentally flawed process," said Carleen Thomas of North Vancouver's Tsleil-Waututh Nation. "The voices of Canadian citizens are not being respected or heard, and this is wrong."

The hearings will last for 10 days in BC and will wrap up in Calgary next month. Local municipalities, environmental groups, First Nations and residents who live along the pipeline are set to deliver final arguments.

The **National Energy Board** streamlined the review process to meet time limits set by the previous Conservative government. Interveners are not allowed to cross-examine Kinder Morgan representatives and instead had to send in written questions. The company answered a portion of those questions.

Karen Campbell, a lawyer with **Ecojustice**, said the process is "incredibly broken," noting that the review does not consider the potential impacts of the project on climate change.

"The federal government needs to step up and it needs to stop this flawed process right now," she said. "It's not too late."

Trudeau promised on the campaign trail in June to engage in a “new open process” for all pipelines and in August said it would apply to existing pipelines.

Burnaby Mayor [Derek Corrigan](#) has also written Trudeau, asking him to put the review on hold while the government implements the promised changes.

Kai Nagata with environmental group Dogwood Initiative said if the process continues without changes, then the Liberal government will have broken its election promise.

“The clock is ticking,” he said.

“There’s an irony in letting this unfold while promising real change and promising to overhaul the process.”

Karen Mahon of [ForestEthics Advocacy](#) said of the 55 interveners set to make arguments at the Burnaby hearings, 50 oppose the project.

The City of Surrey was the first to deliver arguments, with lawyer Anthony Capuccinello reiterating its opposition to the expansion.

The city, about 45 kilometres east of Vancouver, is asking the board to require Kinder Morgan to decommission and remove the portion of the current pipeline that runs through Surrey as a condition of any approval it grants.

“You have heard, through the submissions and argument of Trans Mountain, a story applauding the expertise of the board’s advisers, a story full of self-serving statements expressing how fair this process has been,” Capuccinello told the three-member panel.

“Sadly, that story is a fiction. The City of Surrey’s submissions and argument are based on facts facts supported in evidence and facts supported by law.”

Capuccinello criticized the energy board's advisers for "falling asleep at the wheel," saying their lack of expertise is clear from the draft conditions the board submitted for comment.

He also expressed concerns about the ability of municipalities to cover expenses and be reimbursed for any additional costs they incur as a result of the expansion.

The BC government announced last week it could not support the project because of concerns about spill response and aboriginal support while the Alberta government backed the project because of its economic benefits.

Direct Link: <http://www.news1130.com/2016/01/19/aboriginals-environmentalists-rally-outside-trans-mountain-hearings/>

N.L. aboriginal leaders push feds for more fishery guardians

Five aboriginal leaders from N.L. met with Federal Fisheries Minister Hunter Tootoo last week

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 19, 2016 1:27 PM NT Last Updated: Jan 19, 2016 1:27 PM NT



Brendan Mitchell, chief of the Qalipu Mi'kmaq band, wants to see more funding given to Aboriginal Fishery Guardians. (Brian McHugh/CBC)

For the first time, the chief of the Qalipu Mi'kmaq band, along with four other aboriginal leaders from Newfoundland and Labrador, met with the federal government to discuss the need for more Aboriginal Fishery Guardians.

Guardians work to help fisheries officers enforce aboriginal fishing agreements.

"If there's no presence, people will end up illegal fishing and poaching," band chief Brendan Mitchell told CBC Radio's *Central Morning*.

"These gentlemen are watch dogs. They're there to make sure things are being done right, and people take these river guardians very serious."

According to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the patrol program is designed to "monitor the aboriginal fishery, record the catch and maintain compliance with the communal licence."

Guardians also patrol rivers for illegal activities and monitor landing stations.



Mitchell says more guardians are needed to monitor the massive river system in central Newfoundland, like the Exploits River. (Submitted by Janice Rowsell)

The program, Mitchell said, provides a number of guardians to patrol rivers in central and western Newfoundland.

"In the last couple of years, we've had six guardians on the west coast and four only in the Gander river system," he said.

Mitchell believes the central area system needs more guardians — perhaps even more than the west coast.

But primarily, the band chief would like to see more funding given to the program.

"The same amount we've been asked to use 20 years ago, despite inflation and other things, is still being used today," he said.

Guardians, he said, encourage conservation and work to ensure the river systems remain intact for years to come.

First meeting

All five of the province's aboriginal leaders met with Federal Fisheries Minister Hunter Tootoo in St. John's last week.

Mitchell said Tootoo has a great sense of humour, and seems very interested in what's happening in the province, and across the county, with respect to aboriginal affairs.



In a show of support for Newfoundland and Labrador's seal harvest, Fisheries Minister Hunter Tootoo arrived at his meeting with Premier Dwight Ball wearing a sealskin jacket and tie. (Eddy Kennedy/CBC)

"The deputy minister was there also, as were six members of parliament for Newfoundland," he said.

Mitchell said the Liberal government, both provincially and federally, seems very interested in the aboriginal movement.

Following his meeting with Tootoo, Mitchell said he also sat down with DFO.

"They recognize that we are doing valuable work on behalf of conservation ... and there seems to be a view that we are going to be getting some help, and I hope that happens for us — and I'll keep reminding them until we do."

Mitchell will sit down with DFO again on Feb. 2.

He said he hopes to have secured more funding for guardians in central Newfoundland by the end of that meeting.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/aboriginal-fishery-guardians-tootoo-mitchell-qalipu-1.3410205>

Two more B.C. First Nations approve GasLink pipeline project



Russ Girling, president and CEO of TransCanada Corp., addresses the company's annual meeting in Calgary, Friday, April 27, 2012. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Jeff McIntosh

VANCOUVER -- One of the companies that wants to ship natural gas by pipeline across northern British Columbia says two more north-central B.C. First Nations have given their approval for the Coastal GasLink project.

TransCanada Corp. (TSX:TRP) says the Nadleh Whut'en First Nation, west of Prince George, and the West Moberly First Nation north of Chetwynd, have signed project agreements.

Coastal GasLink says it now has approvals from 11 First Nations communities along the length of the 670-kilometre proposed pipeline and progress is being made with the remaining First Nations groups.

Coastal GasLink president Rick Gateman says the agreements outline benefits and commitments that will be provided for the life of the pipeline, and mark the beginning of continued discussion and feedback.

West Moberly First Nation Chief Roland Willson says members have worked closely with the company to ensure culture, environment, safety and economic benefits are respected.

Coastal GasLink wants to build and operate a natural gas pipeline from the Dawson Creek area in northeastern B.C. to the proposed LNG Canada liquefied natural gas export facility on the central coast, near Kitimat.

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/business/two-more-b-c-first-nations-approve-gaslink-pipeline-project-1.2745204>

Trans Mountain pipeline hearing begins amid calls for PM Trudeau to step in and halt 'incredibly broken' process

BY LAURA KANE, THE CANADIAN PRESS JANUARY 19, 2016

BURNABY, B.C. — First Nations and environmentalists called on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to stop a National Energy Board review of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion as hearings on the proposal began Tuesday.

Opponents of Kinder Morgan's US\$5.4 billion plan to triple the current capacity of the Alberta-to-B.C. pipeline held a rally outside the hearings in Burnaby, B.C. Speakers demanded Trudeau immediately stop the hearings and overhaul the review process.

"This is a fundamentally flawed process," said Carleen Thomas of North Vancouver's Tsleil-Waututh Nation. "The voices of Canadian citizens are not being respected or heard, and this is wrong."

The hearings will last for 10 days in B.C. and will wrap up in Calgary next month. Local municipalities, environmental groups, First Nations and residents who live along the pipeline are set to deliver final arguments.

The National Energy Board streamlined the review process to meet time limits set by the previous Conservative government. Interveners are not allowed to cross-examine Kinder Morgan representatives and instead had to send in written questions. The company answered a portion of those questions.

Karen Campbell, a lawyer with [Ecojustice](#), said the process is "incredibly broken," noting that the review does not consider the potential impacts of the project on climate change.

"The federal government needs to step up and it needs to stop this flawed process right now," she said. "It's not too late."

Trudeau promised on the campaign trail in June to engage in a "new open process" for all pipelines and in August said it would apply to existing pipelines.

Burnaby Mayor Derek Corrigan has also written Trudeau, asking him to put the review on hold while the government implements the promised changes.

Kai Nagata with environmental group [Dogwood Initiative](#) said if the process continues without changes, then the Liberal government will have broken its election promise.

"The clock is ticking," he said.

"There's an irony in letting this unfold while promising real change and promising to overhaul the process."

Karen Mahon of [ForestEthics Advocacy](#) said of the 55 interveners set to make arguments at the Burnaby hearings, 50 oppose the project.

The City of Surrey was the first to deliver arguments on Tuesday, with lawyer Anthony Capuccinello reiterating its opposition to the expansion.

The city, about 45 kilometres east of Vancouver, is asking the board to require Kinder Morgan to decommission and remove the portion of the current pipeline that runs through Surrey as a condition of any approval it grants.

"You have heard, through the submissions and argument of Trans Mountain, a story — a story applauding the expertise of the board's advisers, a story full of self-serving statements expressing how fair this process has been," Capuccinello told the three-member panel.

"Sadly, that story is a fiction. The City of Surrey's submissions and argument are based on facts — facts supported in evidence and facts supported by law."

Capuccinello criticized the energy board's advisers for "falling asleep at the wheel," saying their lack of expertise is clear from the draft conditions the board submitted for comment.

He also expressed concerns about the ability of municipalities to cover expenses and be reimbursed for any additional costs they incur as a result of the expansion.

The B.C. government announced last week it could not support the project because of concerns about spill response and aboriginal support, while the Alberta government backed the project because of its economic benefits.

Direct Link:

<http://www.theprovince.com/technology/first+nations+environmentalists+rally+outside+trans+mountain/11661882/story.html>

Inuit Circumpolar Council strikes commission on High Arctic polynya's future

ICC head says commission will head to High Arctic in spring, Greenland in summer

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 21, 2016 4:30 AM CT Last Updated: Jan 21, 2016 4:30 AM CT



Eider ducks fly over a polynya near Sanikiluaq, Nunavut. Polynya are areas of open water surrounded by sea ice, and are important for the survival of Arctic species such as narwhal and beluga. (Google Canada)

The Inuit Circumpolar Council has struck a special commission to consult Inuit on how to save the North Water Polynya — the world's largest body of open water in the High Arctic.

Polynya are areas of year-round open water surrounded by sea ice. The North Water Polynya — traditionally known as Píkialasorsuaq — between Ellesmere Island and Greenland is approximately 85,000 square kilometres in size and is a critical habitat for many species Inuit depend on, such as narwhal and beluga.

The Píkialaorsuaq Commission will consist of Okalik Eegeesiak, the international chairperson of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, as well as former Nunavut premier Eva Aariak and former Greenland premier Kuupik Kleist.

"We will be going to communities to consult with Inuit and hunters who occupy the area to get their suggestions and provide direction on how they want the area co-managed," said Eegeesiak. "If they want it protected... how do we do that?"

The Inuit Circumpolar Councils of both Canada and Greenland, as well as environmental groups, will participate in the commission.

Eegeesiak said the commission plans to visit High Arctic communities in Canada this spring before heading to Greenland in the summer months, following ice break-up.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/polynya-council-struck-1.3412801>

January 21, 2016 10:20 am

Nova Scotia judge wants impact statement from First Nation on Northern Pulp effluent leak

By Staff The Canadian Press



The Northern Pulp Mill is pictured here.

Northern Pulp Corporation

A Nova Scotia judge wants to hear how an effluent leak from a pulp mill affected those living in Pictou Landing First Nations before he makes a decision on sentencing.

Judge Del Atwood accepted a guilty plea from Northern Pulp Corporation Wednesday on the Fisheries Act charge, but before any further discussion he

questioned why members of Pictou Landing First Nations were not asked about the impact of the leak.

READ MORE: [Northern Pulp Mill under scrutiny for mill's pollution emissions](#)

Atwood acknowledged the Crown and defence agreed to a joint statement of facts, but considering the history between the First Nations community and the mill, he says he needs to hear more from those directly affected.

The Fisheries Act charge was laid following an Environment Canada investigation into an alleged incident between June 10 and 11, 2014.

Paul Adams with the Public Prosecution Service of Canada told Atwood victim impact statements weren't taken because they were not legally required, but he says he will have Environment Canada investigators contact Pictou Landing First Nations soon about the matter.

Both the Crown and defence agreed to return to court Feb. 24 for sentencing.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2468595/nova-scotia-judge-wants-impact-statement-from-first-nation-on-northern-pulp-effluent-leak/>

Land Claims & Treaty Rights

B.C. government opposes First Nations title claim around Ajax

By [James Peters](#)

January 15, 2016 - 11:58am Updated: January 15, 2016 - 5:38pm



Image Credit: CFJC Today

KAMLOOPS — The province of British Columbia says it is not giving up the title to private property in and around Kamloops without a fight.

The provincial government announced today it will vigorously oppose the First Nations Aboriginal rights and title claim filed in September by the Tk'emlups and Skeetchestn bands.

While the Tsilhqot'in decision in 2014 had wide-ranging impacts on aboriginal title and rights in Canada, Kamloops-South Thompson MLA Todd Stone says that did not involve private property.

"The Tsilhqot'in decision involved crown land, there was no component to that claim that involved any private property rights. That is what makes this claim quite a bit different from the Tsilhqot'in decision," said Stone, who added, "at the end of the day, we're going to make sure

that the rights of property owners and the sanctity of private property is vigorously defended."

Stone says many people may not realize the Tk'emlups and Skeetchestn claims encompass a huge part of the Kamloops area, including a lot of private property.

He adds it could be two years before the issue goes to court.

In the meantime, Stone says it will be business as usual for the Environmental Assessment Office, which is expected to receive the KGHM-Ajax application on Monday.

The Jacko Lake area where KGHM-Ajax is planning to build an open pit copper-gold mine is a central part of the First Nations claim.

Direct Link: <http://cfjctoday.com/article/508436/bc-government-files-response-first-nations-title-claim>

B.C. government opposes aboriginal group's land claim near Kamloops

By [Justin McElroy](#) Web Producer Global News, January 16, 2016 9:14 pm
Updated: January 17, 2016 9:17 am



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Listen

A legal fight is brewing over title to land in and around Kamloops.

The provincial government now says it will oppose an aboriginal rights and title claim filed by two First Nations, opposing a proposed open pit copper and gold mine.

“This is where we really truly believe that these First Nations have gone too far,” said Todd Stone, MLA for Kamloops-South Thompson.

“This is one step too far, and we want British Columbians to know that we are going to vigorously defend the sanctity of private property and the rights of private property owners.”

The Tk'emlups and Skeetchestn bands declared title to Jacko Lake and surrounding private property last June and filed a claim in B.C. supreme court in September.

They claim the province and the mining company KGHM Ajax never consulted with them. They're also concerned about the environmental impact on the surrounding area by the proposed mine.

“Yeah, it is private property, but who owns that property?” asked Ron Ignace, Chief of the Skeetchestn Indian Band.

“It's a foreign company. How did they get those lands from the farmers that were there, I would like to know. Where was [Stone] in protecting those farmers private property before the mining company took it over is the question.”

The province says it could be at least two years before the issue goes to court.

– *With files from CFJC*

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2459010/b-c-government-oppose-aboriginal-groups-land-claim-near-kamloops/>

B.C. proposal aims to have First Nations own chunks of major projects

If Ottawa buys in, scheme could lead to new era of cooperation on mining, gas and other development

BY PETER O'NEIL, VANCOUVER SUN JANUARY 20, 2016 12:34 PM



Retired B.C. conservative Senator Gerry St Germain, Canada's first self-declared Metis cabinet minister and former chairman of the Senate's Aboriginal Peoples committee before his 2012 retirement. St. Germain, who is working on a volunteer basis, has travelled the province speaking to First Nations to promote the idea.

Photograph by: Wayne Leidenfrost , Vancouver Sun

OTTAWA — A B.C. First Nations-led proposal to unlock billions of dollars in natural resource wealth across the country has received seed funding from the federal government, The Vancouver Sun has learned.

And if the First Nations Major Projects Coalition can persuade Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to go a step further and accept their biggest request — loan guarantees to allow aboriginal communities to buy equity stakes in major projects — that could lead to a historic breakthrough, say its backers.

The loan guarantee idea has been endorsed by the B.C. Business Council and the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, an Ottawa-based think-tank.

Both said the proposal could resolve one of Canada's and especially B.C.'s most daunting challenge — how to get approval for pipelines, mines and other projects after a landmark 2014 Supreme Court of Canada expanded aboriginal land title rights.

“The development of the First Nations Major Projects Coalition is one of the most exciting — and important — developments in indigenous business in recent decades,” said institute spokesman Brian Lee Crowley.

B.C. Business Council's Jock Finlayson said his organization supports the proposal in principle, even if a loan support program could pose risks for taxpayers if a project falls apart and the band is unable to repay its debt.

“It's important to recognize that taxpayers in Canada are already devoting many billions of dollars to the First Nations file each year, very little of which encourages, let alone helps to kick starts economic development,” Finlayson said.

“If done right, allocating a modest sum to an initiative that makes more capital available to First Nations that are keen to advance projects and accelerate economic development in their communities could pay significant dividends for everyone — aboriginal and non-aboriginal alike.”

A federal spokeswoman, Michelle Perron, said Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett “looks forward” to seeing the results of the coalition's examination of the potential benefits of a government loan guarantee.

The coalition has made clear to corporate Canada that B.C. First Nations along the corridor linking Prince George to the B.C. coast are not interested in pipelines pumping diluted bitumen crude from Alberta. They fear an accident could have devastating consequences to their fishing and hunting grounds.

But the group is prepared to negotiate with companies in areas like mining and liquefied natural gas, as long as the economic benefits are worthwhile and the environmental risks minimized.

In late December, the coalition received the first instalment in a new three-year, \$3-million funding agreement to help the 22 First Nation signatories advance their economic interests.

The money, on top of \$2 million already contributed in start-up funds, is to be used to help band leaders in remote communities meet to develop strategies and negotiating positions.

They will also be able to hire experts in areas such as finance, environmental assessment and government procurement to develop economic and environmental plans to open the door to profitable and environmentally-sustainable deals with companies.

One goal is to prevent resource companies from coming into the region with a divide-and-conquer strategy that results in less advantageous economic deals, said one of the members of the coalition's steering committee.

"We're taking scraps off the table when our communities are divided. This will allow us to work together," said Theresa Tait-Day, a hereditary chief with the Wet'suwet'en Nation, who lives near Smithers in northwestern B.C.

But the coalition argues that true economic development won't take place unless First Nations are allowed to take equity stakes with companies operating on their territory.

The coalition is getting important support from two men. The first is Harold Calla, a certified professional accountant, Squamish First Nation member, and executive chair of the First Nations Financial Management Board, a federal entity established in the early 2000s to help entrepreneurial First Nations move away from the Indian Act.

His sidekick is retired B.C. conservative Senator Gerry St Germain, Canada's first self-declared Metis cabinet minister and former chairman of the Senate's Aboriginal Peoples committee before his 2012 retirement.

St. Germain, who is working on a volunteer basis, has travelled the province speaking to First Nations to promote the idea.

One of his techniques is to hold up a pencil and break it in half. Then he holds up a handful of pencils, tries to break them in half, and of course fails.

"Strength in numbers" is the Calla-St. Germain message as they help First Nations cooperate to negotiate both equity deals and environmental reviews on their traditional territories.

The backers are trying to avoid a repeat of what happened with the Pacific Trails Pipeline project. Chevron Canada is planning to build a 480-kilometre natural gas pipeline from Summit Lake, B.C., just north of Prince George, to feed its proposed Kitimat LNG facility at Bish Cove on the B.C. coast.

A coalition of 16 First Nations negotiated a 30-per-cent equity stake in the project, but it hit a snag when they went to banks to come up with the \$300-million loan. The hefty interest rate offered was roughly equal to the 11-per-cent annual return the deal would have brought them in dividends.

The First Nations ended up getting a settlement much lower than what an equity agreement would have generated, according to Calla.

But if there was a government guarantee providing the bank with assurance, the rate could be less than a third of that — resulting in a steady profit for the band.

Both men are advancing an idea that was developed about three years ago during a meeting of First Nations leaders discussing issues like liquefied natural gas development, said Tait-Day.

Calla said First Nations elsewhere in Canada are expressing an interest in participating.

“We’re starting to work with the Ring of Fire communities (in Ontario), we’re talking to some communities in Atlantic Canada around fisheries. This is one of the reasons why the commission termed itself “major projects,” as it’s not just oil and gas, it’s mining, it’s forestry, it’s fisheries, it’s green energy.”

Calla said he hopes St. Germain, a wealthy businessman who obtained support from former prime minister Harper when the federal bureaucracy was resisting the idea, will remain involved despite the change in government.

“We’ve asked him to because it was a non-partisan position, he’s never gotten paid for it, and he has tremendous standing in First Nations communities — and I don’t think many people understand that,” Calla said.

“He’s seen by First Nations as having integrity and being honourable. He speaks the truth and he speaks a language they can understand.”

Read more:<http://www.vancouversun.com/business/proposal+aims+have+first+nations+chunks+major+projects/11662706/story.html#ixzz3xpTDq2xD>

David Suzuki, Chief Stewart Phillip and First Nations draw line in the snow against Site C

Members of Treaty 8 and their supporters have drawn a line in the snow at the historic Rocky Mountain Fort to stop ongoing clearing for the \$8.8 billion Site C Dam.

The Rocky Mountain Fort, first established in 1793 as a fur trading post, marks the site of some of the first interactions between First Nations people and European settlers in the Peace Region.

“This fort was the initial relationship place, but I think there is so much significance down this whole valley,” said Helen Knott, who has been camped out at the Fort in shifts since New Years Eve.

The Rocky Mountain Fort is just one of the 42 heritage sites listed by the environmental impact statement for Site C that would be affected by the dam. Now home to new occupants, the Fort represents a new relationship as members of Treaty 8 stand with non-First Nations supporters in an effort to protect the culturally and historically significant sites that would be flooded by the 107 km-long Site C reservoir.

Construction and clearing for the Site C project began in August 2015 and has continued despite ongoing court cases raised by Treaty 8. The Supreme Court rejected the West Moberly First Nations and Prophet River First Nation request for an injunction to halt construction back in late August.

Since then, construction and clearing has continued largely unchallenged until November, when the first protester was arrested for obstructing traffic to the construction site.



In late November a hunting tent was established at the Rocky Mountain Fort but the Camp was not consistently occupied until New Year's Eve. The New Year began with three additional arrests at a protest in solidarity with the Rocky Mountain Fort camp at the Site C construction gate on Jan. 6th.

All three protesters were charged with mischief. One of them was seed farmer and past Peace River Regional District Director Arthur Hadland. Moments before his arrest Hadland expressed, "If you don't stand for something you'll fall for anything."

The Rocky Mountain site is largely isolated. Cold winter conditions make it difficult for boats to access the site, so the only way for supporters to access the fort is via a three-plus hour drive from Fort St. John down unmaintained back roads or by helicopter.

When questioned on the challenges of living at the camp Yvonne Tupper explained, "actually its natural, it's really weird to say but I think I was groomed with the life I lead, the challenges that I faced as an indigenous woman, the guidance of my family, friends, relatives, my work, it has all really prepared me to be a humanitarian to stick up for human rights and learn about civil liberties and laws."

Tupper said that "there's a lot more than just me standing here" referencing her culture and historical ties to the valley, as well as the interconnectedness of the Site C Dam to ongoing First Nations issues and a complicated relationship with government.

“Every time I see a Hydro worker it’s like a reenactment of the Treaty 8 signing because its interpretation, its language, its gestures, its intimidation and bluffing,” said Tupper.

Knott who explained that she was the descendant of one of the chiefs who originally signed Treaty 8 shared this sentiment.

“Who would have thought that we would be here in our grandfathers footsteps but for this purpose.” Said Knott. “When my great-great grandfather signed that treaty it was with foresight. One of the young guys out here today said ‘I’m a child and I have to live through this so I should have a say’. That’s what I think of as a parent.”

In an official statement from BC Hydro Dave Conway explained, “We respect the right of all individuals to peacefully protest and express their opinions about the Site C project in a safe and lawful manner. Our immediate concern is to ensure the safety of both Site C workers and the protesters.

As such, while we do have equipment in the area, we are not moving equipment within the immediate proximity of individuals or the encampment itself. All other construction activities are continuing as planned.” Members of the camp have been maintaining a fire near a bridge over the Moberly to prevent workers from proceeding with clearing.

The harsh winter conditions, isolation and an eviction notice from BC Hydro to have the camp dismantled by Jan. 1 have done little to dampen the determination of those camped out.

“What we’ve been saying is, as long as the sun shines the grass grows and the river flows,” said Knott, when asked how long they intended to stay.

Conway would not specify whether BC Hydro would pursue an injunction to remove protesters and said only that “we are evaluating all options and will continue to monitor the situation. We are hopeful this can be resolved.”

Despite strong passions, both Knott and Tupper admitted that there have certainly been challenges over the course of their time at the Fort. But on Dec. 12, the camp received a high profile visit from Dr. David Suzuki and Grande Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

“I heard that the camp had been set up and figured wow, this is really going to get things going. So I just wanted to let them know that they are not alone,” said Suzuki.

Dr. Suzuki also expressed his frustration that after managing to stop the Site C Dam 30 years ago people now find themselves fighting the same project.

“It’s just amazing to me that the truth and reconciliation report has come out and Christy Clark is saying with recent First Nations court case rulings everything is going to change, when meanwhile nothing has changed,” said Suzuki.

Dr. Suzuki went on to say, “I’m asking what do treaties with Canada mean if Canada signs treaties do we mean it or not?”

According to Dr. Suzuki, the fact that this project has continued despite ongoing court cases meant that pro-business and pro-development politics overrode everything else including treaties signed with First Nations and described the situation as “shameful.”

Grande Chief Phillip echoed the frustration that the project has been allowed to continue despite continuing cases.

“I’ve had the honor and privilege to be up in Treaty 8 territory over the span of a number of years, I’ve participated in the Paddle for the Peace pretty much every year now for the last several years so I’ve seen first-hand the beauty of this land so to come back and see such horrific destruction and devastation is absolutely heart breaking,” said Grande Chief Phillip, when asked what seeing the site and visiting the Fort meant to him

Despite his expressed sadness, Grande Chief Phillip went on to say, “I’m so deeply honored to be here in this camp knowing what it represents and my heart goes out to the people that had it within their hearts to come out here in the dead of winter and set this camp up.”

The visit had a profound impact on the spirits of those at the camp, as Knott emotionally explained, “Honestly I was out there earlier and seeing the helicopter coming in I started crying because it’s really hard.”

Tupper said that her group had one male at the camp and they noticed that he needed a break so they started praying for men to come and support them every night.

“Today I looked at my friend Helen Knott and said your prayers have been answered look who you called for,” said Tupper.

Dr. Suzuki and Grande Chief Stewart Phillip expressed the hope that their visit would help to build support for the camp both across the province and the country. Grande Chief Phillip stressed the importance of building solidarity among all people stating, “We need to begin to organize people working in solidarity and unity.”

Dr. Suzuki then built on this point adding, “What excites me here is you see non First Nations people willing to go and get arrested and go to jail. It’s got to be more than just First Nations people.”

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip exclaimed, “It always takes the courage and integrity of a small group of people to bring about social change. World history has proven that and this is what this camp represents.”

Since the visit, support for the small group camped out has been pouring in on social media under the hashtag #NoSiteC., helping to capture the province’s attention. Organizers say that individuals everywhere are watching to see what unfolds at the Rocky Mountain Fort to determine the future of the Peace River Valley and BC’s largest public infrastructure project.

Source URL: <http://www.vancouverobserver.com/politics/commentary/david-suzuki-chief-stewart-phillip-and-first-nations-draw-line-snow-against-site>

Ottawa told to consult First Nation about Northern Pulp spill

THE CHRONICLE HERALD

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Judge makes discussion a condition of imposing sentence on effluent spill guilty plea

PICTOU — Northern Pulp pleaded guilty Wednesday to a charge under the federal Fisheries Act stemming from a 2014 effluent spill.

Lawyers for the federal Environment Department and the mill arrived at Pictou provincial court with an agreed statement of facts and prepared to enter the plea and seek a sentence from Judge Del Atwood.

However, Atwood refused to render a sentence until the Pictou Landing First Nation was consulted about the effect the spill had on the band.

“The concern I have is courts have typically taken into account community impact in pollution-related offences,” Atwood told the lawyers.

“I cannot simply ignore the long history between (the mill’s operators) and the Pictou Landing First Nation.”

The decision to demand consultation appeared to take federal government lawyer Paul Adams and defence attorney Harvey Morrison by surprise.

“There is no clear legal basis,” Adams told the judge of his requirement for consultation.

“I would like some direction.”

In the end, Adams told Atwood that he would direct federal investigators to contact the First Nation to discuss the spill. All parties will return to court Feb. 24 to seek a sentence.

“I think this is a responsible decision by the judge,” Pictou Landing Chief Andrea Paul said in a statement sent to media.

“First Nations want to be consulted when it comes to protection of our resources.”

The charge stemmed from a rupture of a pipe carrying raw effluent from the kraft pulp mill at Abercrombie Point to its treatment facility adjacent to the First Nation. At the time, the province’s Environment Department estimated over 4.5 million litres of untreated waste poured into a wetland and, from there, into Pictou Harbour.

Because the effluent ultimately flowed into the ocean, which falls under federal jurisdiction, the charge of having unlawfully deposited or having permitted the deposit of

a deleterious substance in water frequented by fish was laid by Environment Canada rather than by the province.

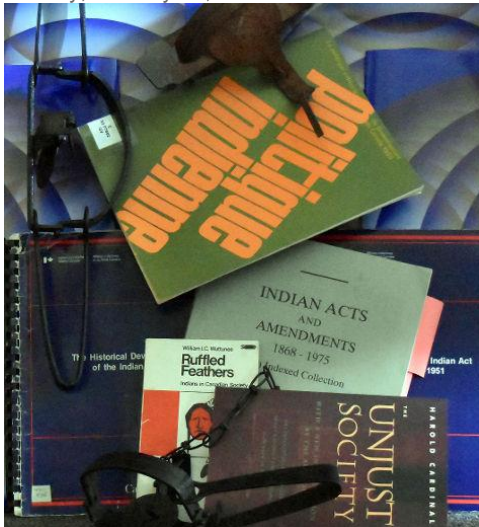
The leak and the way it was handled by the company sparked a blockade by the Pictou Landing First Nation. A deal was brokered by the province that saw the First Nation end its blockade, the pipe get repaired and the government pass legislation promising to close the Boat Harbour treatment site by 2020.

Direct Link: <http://thechronicleherald.ca/novascotia/1335965-ottawa-told-to-consult-first-nation-about-northern-pulp-spill>

Getting rid of Indian Act no easy chore

By [Karl Hele](#)

Sunday, January 17, 2016 9:11:51 EST PM



GARDEN RIVER FIRST NATION - Since the election of Justin Trudeau and the Liberal Party in fall 2015, many First Nations individuals and leaders have renewed or reinvigorated calls to replace or repeal the Indian Act.

Created in 1876, drawn from previous legislation and colonial attitudes, the Indian Act reflects settler views of and dreams for First Nations. Often cast as a relic of the past, the Act itself has often been 'updated' and 'modernized' since its inception, with the most recent changes being undertaken in 2014 by former prime minister Stephen Harper. At various times in its history, Canadians and First Nations have called for the Act to be repealed or modified to better suit the contemporary world. For instance, the Act was modified in 1951 to better reflect the recent creation of human rights legislation. Other amendments took place in 1985 in an attempt to end gender bias within the Act. Another amendment in 2011 represented a further attempt to eliminate gender discrimination.

The 2014 changes eliminated the idea of residential schools as well as bans on trading or selling agricultural produce to whites. All of these changes were undertaken to modernize the Act and bring it generally in line with settler society developments from the mid-20th century onward.

This is not meant to ignore First Nations' protests, court actions, and lobbying efforts to bring about these changes, but to reflect a notion that such changes would not have been possible without changes within Settler society. Yet, the Indian Act itself still bears the indelible imprint of colonialism and assimilation (now politely referred to as integration). So the question now arises, is settler society finally ready to repeal the Indian Act and what legislation will replace it?

Settler society seemed ready to repeal the Indian Act in 1969. After consulting with various First Nations across Canada, former Liberal prime minister Pierre Trudeau's minister of Indian Affairs, Jean Chrétien, issued the 1969 White Paper. Essentially, the White Paper would repeal the Indian Act, treaties, and other 'privileges' granted to Indians in an effort to create a 'just society.'

While speaking to a higher ideal of 'equal treatment,' the White Paper was a Machiavellian move that would have seen all Indians administratively assimilated into Canadian society as "equals." The resulting protests and general rejection (there were some Indians supporting the White Paper) of the document led Trudeau to abandon the policy. The policies outlined by the 1969 White Paper appeared to have made a limited return under the Harper administration, while the third-party Liberals in 2014 officially and solemnly rejected the 1969 White Paper. More recently, newly elected Prime Minister Justin Trudeau moved to embrace the notion of a nation-to-nation relationship, implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations, and create a commission on murdered and missing indigenous women, among other promises. With these promises comes the call and hope that the Indian Act will be finally "consigned to the dustbin of history."

Eliminating the Indian Act will not be easy. As former prime minister Harper stated, highlighting the difficulties in getting rid of the ingrained law, "After 136 years, that tree has deep roots ... blowing up the stump would just leave a big hole."

While it may be difficult to tear out the stump and the roots of the Indian Act, an effort must be made. The real question is what will replace the Act? Many of those calling for the repeal of this colonial vestige (I would argue all the laws in Canada are colonial vestiges in one form or another.) offer no opinion as to what should come next beyond broad calls for some form of nationhood and self-determination. Without a concrete plan to replace the Indian Act, First Nations will remain at the whim of politicians and the larger settler society to hopefully consult and do what is best.

In addition to its deep roots in the legislative history of Canada, the Indian Act also has broad branches that one must carefully trim before cutting the trunk and prying up the roots.

The Indian Act governs many aspects of First Nations lives as well as controlling our lands, resources, monies, education, and residency. First and foremost, it is safe to say that with the Indian Act there would be no status Indians. The Act defines who is and is not a status Indian based on a variety of criteria relating to both blood and marriage patterns. Status then determines whether or not you practise rights guaranteed under a treaty or under the constitution or courts. If you do not have status, as the Act maintains, then you do not have an Aboriginal right to hunt, fish, gather, etc. (Unless, of course, you can identify as and can be recognized as Métis.) Status, at one time, also determined whether or not you could or could not be a band member, as well as live or be buried on a reserve. In light of the changes in 1985 Bands (this term is also defined by the Indian Act) can adopt a membership code that in theory can allow non-status people to gain membership. The only catch to allowing non-status members to join the membership rolls of a reserve is that these individuals will not receive any benefits relating to being status Indians as administered by the federal government. The non-status members would not even be allowed to vote in Band elections.

Simply, everything in the Indian Act is tied to how it defines status.

Many First Nations communities and people, thanks to 136 years of membership codes and status rules, have internalized colonial aspects of the Indian Act. Based on the rules of the Indian Act more and more people are claiming a non-status identity. These non-status individuals rightly or wrongly then claim membership in a particular community or Nation (i.e. Algonquin, Anishinaabeg, Mohawk, Cherokee) and

occasionally the self-granted right to speak for that community. Often these non-status individuals run afoul of long-held beliefs on reserves and among status Indians that non-status have no rights to membership or any right to claim an Aboriginal/indigenous or national identity. This has led some First Nations to create membership codes based on a blend of tradition and colonial legislation designed to deny non-status and even those who marry non-Indians entry into membership. Such actions by the Bands are then touted as discriminatory and a form of internalized colonialism by non-status, marry-outs, and settler society. Many forget that regardless of the origin of band-implemented membership rules, these rules are expressions of sovereignty and self-determination. Moreover, why does ancestry automatically mean a right to join a First Nations community? One who descends from the famine Irish in Canada cannot simply move back to Ireland and gain citizenship with all its attendant rights and privileges. Why should First Nations be required to accept all claimants as well? Nonetheless, prior to the repeal of the Indian Act, First Nations need to create and implement fair and just membership or citizenship codes that address issues of not only human and indigenous rights as outlined by the United Nations but our traditions, as well.

As you can see, the issue of status and membership by and large forms the trunk. All aspects of the Indian Act begin and start with the issues surrounding membership and status. Some may argue that the colonial and assimilationist agendas form the trunk, but I prefer to see these as the soil in which the tree finds continued nourishment. First Nations (meaning those who are status) need to figure out on a national, community, and a personal level how they each wish to define and deal with citizenship and membership issues. If we do not move forward on our own initiatives, the Indian Department (aka Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada), other federal and provincial bureaucracies, as well as the Liberal Party under the leadership of a second Trudeau, will, in association with the larger political lobby groups representing status, non-status, Metis, settler, and corporate, will shape our individual nations' citizenship laws for better or worse (remember the 1969 White Paper). With this in mind, my future contributions will discuss some of the branches flowing from the status-membership trunk.

Karl S. Hele is an associate professor at Concordia University. He grew up north of Sault Ste. Marie and attended White Pines and Algoma University. His doctorate, from McGill University in 2003, examined the Anishinaabe/missionary interaction in the Sault. His current work continues to explore the dynamics of the region's history. He is also a member of Garden River First Nation. karl.hele@bell.net

Direct Link: <http://www.saultstar.com/2016/01/17/getting-rid-of-indian-act-no-easy-chore>

Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women

Feminism missing from inquiry: aboriginal advocate



Feminism missing from inquiry: aboriginal advocate-Image1

The Canadian Press, 2016

Fay Blaney, chairwoman of Vancouver's annual memorial march for missing and murdered aboriginal women, stands for a photograph in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, B.C., on Thursday January 14, 2016. Blaney says she's concerned an upcoming inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women will leave out an essential issue - feminism. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Darryl Dyck

Jan 17, 2016

VANCOUVER — A chairwoman of Vancouver's annual memorial march for missing and murdered aboriginal women says she's concerned a national inquiry will leave out a crucial issue — feminism.

Fay Blaney, who co-chairs the February 14th Women's Memorial March Committee said the starting point of an inquiry must be the barriers indigenous women face in Canadian society.

Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett is touring the country to meet with families, survivors and aboriginal representatives to hear what they want from an inquiry.

Blaney attended an all-day meeting in Vancouver last Wednesday and wants to meet with Bennett to discuss the inquiry's parameters.

"It needs to proceed from a feminist perspective. This is an issue of indigenous women's equality," she said. "I didn't hear that coming from them."

Her fears are part of a broader concern among front-line workers and advocacy groups that they are being shut out of the process. Blaney said the consultations appear to be focused on families, and while it's important for them to have a voice, they're only one perspective.

"Each one has a unique story to tell and it's instructive in terms of the data and information that comes from those stories, and it can lead to healing of the families involved," she said.

"But my position is that the women in the Downtown Eastside and other urban centres across this country are estranged from families."

Blaney's committee advocates year-round for women in the city's troubled Downtown Eastside and is one of several groups, including Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter, that have sent a letter to Bennett asking for a special meeting.

Rape Relief spokeswoman Hilla Kerner said approaching the inquiry using a feminist framework would mean examining the power relationships that have an impact on aboriginal women.

"Aboriginal women are vulnerable to male violence first and foremost because they are women, then because they are aboriginal, and then because they are poor," she said. "The intersection between colonialism and sexism plays a crucial role."

Dawn Lavell-Harvard, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, is also calling on the government to hold separate meetings with front-line workers and grassroots groups.

She said she was told before the meetings started that they were for families only.

"We absolutely understand and respect the need for the families to go first," she said. "We just want to make sure that there is an opportunity for those meetings with those people who do the work on the ground."

Sabrina Williams, a spokeswoman for the ministry, said front-line organizations are invited to the meetings, which are scheduled to end in Ottawa on Feb. 15.

She said participants have stressed the need for an inquiry to have an indigenous perspective and address the root causes of violence and the effects of residential schools.

Some families have complained that the meetings are being rushed. Williams said every effort was being made to ensure relatives have as much notice as possible to participate.

"We are trying to find the balance between people who want us to get on with the inquiry but also the fact that we want to get it right," she said in a statement.

Candice Stevenson, whose mother went missing 33 years ago, said she only had a week's notice before the Vancouver meeting and she felt like she had to compete for a chance to talk.

"Everybody's rushed, rushed, rushed. People don't get to really speak their minds," she said.

But she said the government shouldn't wait for the inquiry to take action on missing and murdered women, including increasing police resources to investigate cases.

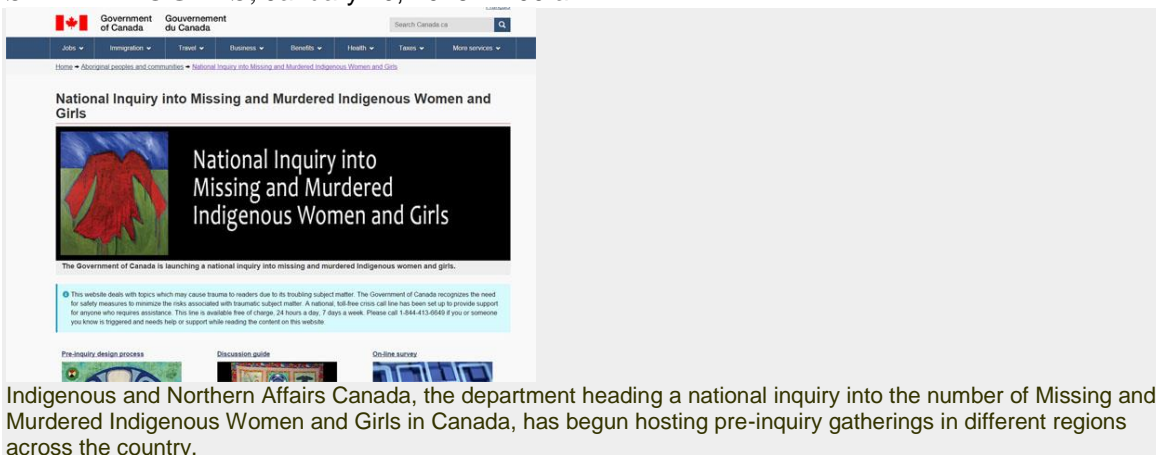
"We already know what's wrong. The violence against women, the systemic racism — we already know those problems exist."

Direct Link: <http://www.durhamregion.com/news-story/6236125-feminism-missing-from-inquiry-aboriginal-advocate/>

Nunavik women, families still have time to register for MMIW event

Saturviit women's association encourages Nunavimmiut to take part

SARAH ROGERS, January 20, 2016 - 7:00 am



The screenshot shows the official website for the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The header includes the Government of Canada logo and navigation links. The main content area features a large graphic with a red dress and the title "National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls". Below the graphic, there is a paragraph stating: "The Government of Canada is launching a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls." A small blue box contains a disclaimer: "This website deals with topics which may cause trauma to readers due to its troubling subject matter. The Government of Canada recognizes the need for safety measures to minimize the risks associated with traumatic subject matter. A national, toll-free crisis call line has been set up to provide support for anyone who requires assistance. This line is available free of charge, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Please call 1-844-413-6582 if you or someone you know is triggered and needs help or support while reading the content on this website." At the bottom, there are three small images labeled "Pre-inquiry design process", "Discussion guide", and "On-line survey".

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, the department heading a national inquiry into the number of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada, has begun hosting pre-inquiry gatherings in different regions across the country.

Two pre-inquiry sessions with the families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls are set to be held in Quebec this week, but it's not too late for Inuit women or families in the province to take part.

The Saturviit Inuit Women's Association of Nunavik is encouraging Nunavimmiut survivors or families of victims to register for one of two gatherings scheduled between Jan. 20 and Jan. 22 in Montreal and Quebec City.

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, the department heading a national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, has begun hosting pre-inquiry gatherings in different regions across the country.

The department, headed by its minister, Carolyn Bennett, has said the government will design the inquiry only after hearing from those directly affected.

Only one gathering has been scheduled in the Arctic — Jan. 29 in Iqaluit.

But while the Iqaluit session will be an Inuit-specific event, it's easier for Nunavimmiut to travel to southern Quebec, Saturviit's Pascale Laneuville said.

"It was easier to get to Montreal," Laneuville said.

"We haven't found any families to attend just yet, but there's still time to register."

Indigenous and Northern Affairs will pay any travel and accommodation expenses for participants. The pre-inquiry gathering takes place in Quebec City Jan. 20 and Jan. 21, and in Montreal Jan. 21 and Jan. 22.

It has been a scramble for Inuit women's groups to coordinate their participation at the events, given the travel required for Inuit women to take part.

The inquiry itself will likely start in the summer of 2016.

"We're hoping we'll be better prepared then," Laneuville said.

The inquiry is finally shaping up after years of pressure from organizations like the Native Women's Association of Canada to address the pervasive issue of violence faced by Indigenous Canadian women and allegations that police and justice system officials have ignored the crisis.

A 2014 RCMP report documents more than 1,200 cases of murdered and missing Indigenous women between 1980 and 2012, although it did not specify how many of them are Inuit.

But a 2015 United Nations report found that young First Nations, Métis and Inuit women were five times more likely to die under violent circumstances than their non-aboriginal counterparts.

Nunavimmiut who want to take part in the pre-inquiry discussions can contact Indigenous and Northern Affairs at 1-877-535-7309.

Participants should indicate if they need translation, childcare or help arranging travel.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674nunavik_women_families_still_have_time_to_register_for_mmiw_event/

Federal ministers in Halifax to discuss missing and murdered indigenous women

Patty Hajdu and Carolyn Bennett met with family of missing women and girls in the region

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 20, 2016 12:35 PM AT Last Updated: Jan 20, 2016 1:55 PM AT



CBC tells the stories of 230 women who have gone missing or have been found murdered, including interviews with 110 families. (CBC)

Minister of Status of Women Patty Hajdu and Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Carolyn Bennett are in Halifax today to meet with the family members and loved ones of missing and murdered indigenous women.

The consultations are taking place across the country to help shape a national public inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.

The ministers spoke with the media about the meetings.

In previous interviews with CBC News, Bennett said that ideally commissioners for the inquiry will be identified by June.

Unlike the consultations, she said, the inquiry itself will be completely independent of government.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/mmiw-missing-murdered-indigenous-women-carolyn-bennett-halifax-1.3411883>

‘Add aboriginal men to murdered women’s inquiry:’ Advocates

January 21, 2016. 10:55 am • Section: [The Search](#)



B.C. aboriginal leader and author Ernie Crey, whose sister disappeared in the Downtown Eastside, believes "now is the time for those who want the inquiry to examine the deaths of aboriginal men and boys to speak up."

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Should the Liberal government’s promised inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women include men?

Canadian aboriginals are killed at about four times the rate of non-aboriginals. And a growing number of aboriginals and others believe the stark conditions that lead to the high murder rate for indigenous women and girls are also behind the even higher rate of homicides of indigenous men and boys.

Since aboriginal males are murdered more often than aboriginal females, advocates believe a gender-inclusive examination of the homicide crisis is the only way to gain a full picture and find healing. Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett has expressed openness to such an approach.

University of B.C. Okanagan political scientist [Adam Jones, a specialist on genocide](#), says politicians and commentators have ignored the murders of aboriginal men out of moral confusion. Statistics also show aboriginal males are most often the killers of aboriginal females.

“It’s the case that the overwhelming majority of perpetrators of severe violence against aboriginal and other women are male. But that has often occluded our understanding of the way that males can be even more

vulnerable to violence from other males than women are,” says Jones, who advises the UN on anti-genocide programs.

Disturbing statistics on aboriginal homicides in regards to females and males

The call for adding indigenous men and boys in the national inquiry is supported by many, including Janine Cunningham, who serves on a national indigenous committee of the Canadian Association of Social Workers and belongs to B.C.’s Tsilhqot’in First Nation.

The statistics are disturbing. UBC Okanagan researcher Penny Handley has discovered that 2,500 aboriginals were murdered between 1982 and 2011 (out of a total of 15,000 Canadian murders).

A further 105 indigenous females have, in that period, been reported missing. Yet Jones, who collaborates with Handley on research, wonders why no data has been collected on missing indigenous males.

Of all of Canada’s aboriginal murder victims, Handley found 71 per cent were men or boys.

At the other end of the grim homicide equation, however, former aboriginal affairs minister Bernard Valcourt and the RCMP have acknowledged seven of 10 killers of aboriginal women are aboriginal males. Only eight per cent of the women’s killers were strangers.

Talk about the federal government’s inquiry into murdered aboriginal women has long made headlines in B.C. That’s in part because of earlier investigations into the [deaths and disappearances of dozens of aboriginal and non-aboriginal women](#) over several decades in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside and on the Highway of Tears west of Prince George.

In B.C., aboriginals comprise about 20 per cent of all homicide victims, even as aboriginals make up only five per cent of the population. That lopsided murder rate soars even higher on the Prairies; more than half of Saskatchewan’s murder victims are aboriginals.

B.C. aboriginal leader and author Ernie Crey, whose sister disappeared in the Downtown Eastside, believes “now is the time for those who want the inquiry to examine the deaths of aboriginal men and boys to speak up.”

Since federal officials are in the process of meeting with interested parties across the country to set the inquiry’s terms of reference, Crey, an adviser to the Sto:lo tribal council, said the opportunity is ripe to urge expanding its scope.

“I don’t know anyone ... who would object to the inquiry looking into the murders of indigenous men.”

Cunningham also said she “wholeheartedly” supports adding males to the inquiry, noting “the focus needs to be broadened to examining the entirety of the issue.”

The views of Crey and Cunningham have been echoed by many aboriginals. They include [Prairie resident Dana Munroe, whose aboriginal boyfriend Neil Blacksmith was murdered](#). The inquiry “should be equal” in regards to gender, Munroe said.

“It should be the same.”



As the author of several books on global genocide, UBC's Adam Jones wants the federal government to avoid further "marginalizing" of aboriginal men and boys. He believes a more inclusive inquiry would be a "watershed" for all Canadians.

Canada's new minister of indigenous affairs also acknowledged interest late last year in including murdered aboriginal males in the inquiry.

"When you look at the systemic problems and effects of colonization, the effects of residential schools, there is no question that men and boys have been victims," Bennett said.

"I think it would be impossible to separate out the needs of the men and boys ... as we begin to address the systemic problem."

As the author of several books on global genocide, Jones wants the federal government to avoid further "marginalizing" of aboriginal men and boys. He believes a more inclusive inquiry would be a "watershed" for all Canadians.

Communal healing is possible, Jones says. A full inquiry would "do justice to both the special and the disproportionate vulnerabilities of First Nations women, especially with regard to domestic and sexual violence, and to the so-far-ignored population of murdered, missing and otherwise victimized aboriginal men."

Direct Link: <http://blogs.vancouversun.com/2016/01/21/include-aboriginal-men-in-murdered-womens-inquiry-advocates/>

January 21, 2016 2:02 pm

Missing and murdered Aboriginal women pre-inquiry underway in Quebec City

By [Raquel Fletcher](#) Quebec City Correspondent Global News



WATCH ABOVE: After much national debate and resistance from the Harper government, Justin Trudeau campaigned on the promise to launch a national inquiry into missing and indigenous women. As Global's Raquel Fletcher reports, that process is now underway.

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Listen

QUEBEC CITY – After much national debate and resistance from the Harper government, Justin Trudeau campaigned on the promise to launch an inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women.

That process is now underway with a series of pre-inquiry meetings across the country.

The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, Carolyn Bennett and the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Mélanie Joly, are visiting 18 cities to engage with representatives of First Nations and Inuit organizations, family members of victims, police and potentially even perpetrators.

On Thursday, they held meetings with family members of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Quebec City.

No one was present from the community of [Val d'Or, where allegations of sexual assault and other abuses were made against eight police officers](#), but the ministers did speak about the scandal.

They said what happened in Val d'Or illustrates the need to expand the scope of the inquiry to include violence and sexual assault, suicide and police misconduct.

“The feminist community in this country does not believe the racism and sexism in policing is a few bad apples,” said Bennett.

“We see Val d’Or as a symptom of a much greater problem.”
The preliminary process will determine the best way to conduct an inquiry.

The government will also use the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, concluded under the Harper government, as a guide.

According to the RCMP, there are around 1,200 missing and murdered Aboriginal women since 1980.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2469243/missing-and-murdered-aboriginal-women-pre-inquiry-underway-in-quebec-city/>

January 21, 2016 by [Alex Soloducha](#)

Domestic Violence Numbers Down, Except for Aboriginal Women

A Statistics Canada report released today shows trends in self-reported spousal violence, with a positive change for the majority of Canadians.

Currently, over 19 million people living in the Canadian provinces are married or qualify as “common law” with their partner. Out of those, about 4 percent, or 760,000 people, reported some type of abuse in the 2014 General Social Survey.

The good news is, this is remarkably lower than the 7 per cent reported in 2004.

Across the provinces, rates were very close to the national average. Since 2004, most provinces have recorded significant declines in self-reported spousal violence.

The largest declines were in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia.

The same number of men and women appear to be victims, and both sexes experienced the decline in numbers.

Still, women are more likely to face severe forms of abuse, with one-quarter reporting sexual assault, beatings, choking, and being threatened with a gun or knife.

Half of these sexual assault victims report being drugged or otherwise manipulated by a partner.

According to Stats Can, 70 per cent of the abuse cases they heard about were not reported to police.

There were new findings when it comes to mental health and domestic violence.

According to Stats Can, over 15 per cent of abuse victims reported suffering psychological affects consistent with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This includes nightmares, repression, feeling constantly on guard, and feeling detached from others.

Women were more likely to suffer from these after effects, especially when victimized multiple times or severely.



The Stats Can survey showed that Aboriginal people were more than twice as likely as non-Aboriginal people to report going through spousal violence in the past five years.

Aboriginal women specifically face abuse more, with 10 per cent reporting it, compared to 3 per cent of non-Aboriginal women reporting it.

Aboriginal people more often reported having experienced abuse as children, a factor that may affect the spousal abuse number.

In 2014, 40 per cent of Aboriginal people reported being sexually or physically abused as a child (or both), compared to less than 30 per cent of non-Aboriginal people.

In the last decade, numbers of spousal abuse haven't changed for the Aboriginal community.

While rates of abuse among the non-Aboriginal population decreased according to the survey, rates for Aboriginal people only lowered by 1 per cent in the ten years that had passed.

Direct Link:

https://www.kelownanow.com/news/news/National_News/16/01/21/Domestic_Violence_Numbers_Down_Except_for_Aboriginal_Women/

Special Topic: Residential Schools, TRC, & '60s Scoop

'Cultural genocide' of Canada's indigenous peoples is a 'mourning label,' former war crimes prosecutor says

JOSEPH BREAN | January 15, 2016 | Last Updated: Jan 15 9:04 PM ET

The “cultural genocide” of Canada’s indigenous people in residential schools is more of a “mourning metaphor” than an accurate legal label, more a “song of bereavement” than a specific indictment under international laws.

That is the controversial argument put forth in a lecture Thursday night by Payam Akhavan, professor of law at McGill University, former United Nations war crimes prosecutor, and now one of the most prominent public figures to question — however tentatively — whether Canada was ever a truly genocidal colonial power.

He does acknowledge there is a way to read the 1948 Genocide Convention's ban on "forced transfer of children" as supporting a claim of biological genocide — the elimination of an entire generation, preventing a group's procreation — provided the specific genocidal intent was in place. A similar argument can be made about forced sterilizations.



Tyler Anderson/National Post Payam Akhavan, former UN war crimes prosecutor and professor of law at McGill, poses for a portrait in Toronto, Ontario, Thursday January 14, 2016. He has written a paper about the "cultural genocide" of Canada's First Nations and how it fits into the global genocidal context.

But "cultural genocide" is a different claim, he said, and the current fixation on the term threatens to leave Canadians "lost in abstractions," and unable to "fathom the depth of human suffering."

His main point is that residential schools were so clearly a crime against humanity — persecution — that he is somewhat baffled by the "insistence" on using the far more debatable term "cultural genocide," with all the historical and legal baggage it carries.

"The question is whether 'cultural genocide' has a legal meaning, and if not, why these words are vested with so much power," he told an audience at York University's Glendon College in Toronto, before surveying the various international legal precedents that inform the question, none conclusively.

Some people will surely be annoyed by his analysis, he said earlier, over a traditional Persian lunch of chicken and beef over rice and spiced yogurt in a Toronto restaurant that displayed a replica of one of the earliest human rights codes, the Cyrus Cylinder.

Akhavan, whose thoughts on human rights as they relate to suffering and redemption will form the basis of an upcoming series of the popular Massey Lectures, is especially well-placed to criticize Canada's new view of itself as a genocidal power. A member of the minority Baha'i faith, he fled Iran with his family as a young boy, grew up in Toronto, studied law first at Osgoode, then at Harvard Law School as a classmate of Barack Obama, whom he remembers as a "radical skinny kid with a backpack."

As a United Nations prosecutor for war crimes in Yugoslavia, where he was targeted for assassination, he remembers thinking of the genocide question, "Who cares?". Academic and legal distinctions seemed to wither in the presence of mass graves and systematic rape. Later, after similar work in Rwanda and elsewhere, terminological debates seemed to him to reflect the "professionalization of human suffering." Survivors have stories, he realized, which are more important than the labels we put on them.



Postmedia files Payam Akhavan says residential schools were clearly a crime against humanity but he's not sure they qualify as cultural genocide.

"I felt there was a human rights industry that was so detached from the reality of suffering," he said. "Everybody says the right things, but somehow nothing changes."

Though it has been current in academic and indigenous circles for years, and was even used by former prime minister Paul Martin, the idea of "cultural genocide" against indigenous people entered Canadian popular discourse last year with a

bang, first when it was used in a speech by the Chief Justice of Canada, Beverley McLachlin, and then a few days later, when chairman Murray Sinclair made it a cornerstone of the report by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Akhavan recalled the applause that greeted Sinclair's use of the term, describing it as a "moment of rhetorical redemption for the long-suffering survivors."

Pitched argument followed, between those who saw the term as a rightful recognition of Canada's genocidal colonial shame, and others who saw it as an exaggeration, wrongly equating residential schools with the seminal atrocity of the Holocaust and the deliberately bloody horrors of Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

Akhavan notes that the Canadian Museum for Human Rights refused to use the term "genocide" for Canada's crimes against indigenous people, and indeed when it opened, there were First Nations protests outside. That decision followed the government's official recognition of just five genocides: Rwanda, Srebrenica, Armenia, the Holodomor and the Holocaust.

We reduce the enormity of human suffering to the rationalist credo of academic concepts in self-delusional rituals that make lofty incantations a substitute for meaningful action.

McLachlin's use of the term gave rise to concerns that this issue might end up before her court, possibly even before her retirement in 2018. But with no criminal prosecutions likely, and many civil claims of survivors settled in broader agreements, this seems increasingly unlikely. And even if it does, Akhavan observes, the difference between the crime against humanity of persecution and the crime of genocide means little to civil law, both being equally culpable and heinous.

More important is the fair and accurate retelling of history, the empathetic treatment of survivors and the national project of reconciliation.

Cultural genocide does, in fact, have a legal meaning. The trouble for Canadians is that this legal meaning was specifically excluded from the 1948 Genocide Convention, partly because of Canada's objection to it, on the grounds that it was "intended to cover certain historical incidents in Europe that have little essential

relevance in Canada,” as the government of the day put it. This exclusion means “cultural genocide” today is like the ghost of a crime.

Akhavan knows denying Canada’s genocide is a risky project. Survivors might resent this apparent minimization of their plight, but he understands the power of “misplaced and displaced anger,” even against scholars who have made it their life’s work to redress genocidal injustice. Academics and indigenous leaders might resent his criticism of a fundamental concept in decolonization theory, but his argument is solid, legalistic, cautious and respectful, revealing the quirks of history that led to the definition of genocide, and the exclusion of cultural genocide.

Key to this process was the horror of the Holocaust, which set a bar so high few countries have come close to matching it. On the other hand, its legal designation as the ultimate crime of genocide made it possible for other victims and survivors to appropriate its legacy, and elevate their demands for justice to a similar status.

, Rwanda, Darfur, and today, in Iraq and Syria, we witness what are often sterile polemical debates on the genocide label, a pretense of empathy, creating the illusion of progress, while we remain bystanders to radical evil. We reduce the enormity of human suffering to the rationalist credo of academic concepts in self-delusional rituals that make lofty incantations a substitute for meaningful action,” Akhavan said.

“I think on the one hand it’s understandable that some of the delegates (to the 1948 convention) believed that the physical extermination of people in gas chambers has to be seen as a different idea than the destruction of monuments or the burning of books and those kind of acts we associate with cultural genocide. But on the other hand, in 1948, the majority of the countries that are now members of the United Nations were still overseas colonies of the European powers. Had they been involved in negotiating the Genocide Convention, they would probably have brought their own experiences and priorities to the table and we may have ended up with a different definition of genocide. Now that did not happen, but it’s important to bear in mind that for people who have been subject to colonial domination, maintaining their identity is as important as physical survival.”

Direct Link: <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/cultural-genocide-of-canadas-indigenous-people-is-a-mourning-label-former-war-crimes-prosecutor-says>

Province working through 34 of 94 TRC recommendations

D.C. FRASER, REGINA LEADER-POST
[More from D.C. Fraser, Regina Leader-Post](#)

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Jim Reiter, Minister responsible for First Nations, Metis and Northern Affairs DON HEALY / REGINA LEADER-POST

Jo-Ann Episkenew was crying in the audience during a presentation at a Regina high school this week.

The First Nations University of Canada professor was watching as students at Thom Collegiate educated a crowd full of people about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which finished its work last year.

The TRC came out with 94 calls to action on how to best improve relations with First Nations peoples in Canada.

Episkenew, an aboriginal professor at FNU, is hoping to find out exactly what commitment the provincial government is making to those recommendations which dealt with a number of provincial issues such as education and health.

“What’s their plan? I guess that’s the fairest place to start from. If they don’t have one, are they making one? And if they’re making one, when can we hear back from them?” she said.

Jim Reiter, minister responsible for First Nations, Metis and Northern Affairs, said work has started on addressing the TRC. A multi-ministry committee set up when the first volumes of the report were released in June has found that 34 of the 94 recommendations directly relate to the province.

“Of those 34, we’re somewhat in alignment with 22 of them already,” he said.

He pointed to two sections of the recommendations from the TRC where the province has already made commitments: Education and the economy.

According to Reiter, the province is a leader in First Nations education, having already passed legislation mandating treaty education in Saskatchewan schools.

On the economic front, Reiter said there has been an 80-per-cent improvement in funding to the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies since the current government took office in 2007.

Still, Reiter admits there is a lot of work to be done.

“We’re going to certainly work through (all 34 recommendations). We’ll see whether we can accommodate them all,” he said.

Making specific recommendations — such as training civil servants on the history of aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools — is something Reiter expects will happen “relatively soon.”

“If there are things that make sense and we can do them relatively quickly, that’s what we should do,” he said.

Bucky Belanger, First Nations critic for the NDP, is hoping the government will move forward on the calls to action and bring some dynamic changes to the province.

“We’re really not all that enthusiastic about some of the feeble effort by the Wall government in terms of responding to the TRC,” he said. “When the Minister comes along and talks about a multi-ministry committee responding to (34) of the (94) recommendations, we don’t see the action that’s really resulting in the change that’s necessary.”

Belanger said there has been very little progress on the economy and education issues singled out by Reiter. Belanger pointed out the province’s 20-per-cent aboriginal employment rate and its 40-per-cent graduation rate as examples where the province is nowhere near where it should be.

Reiter said rather than setting deadlines, the plan going forward is to have discussions and consultations with First Nations’ leaders, which he says he’s already done.

“We’re going to be having more discussions with them going forward as opposed to us setting hard and fast targets,” he said.

Direct Link: <http://leaderpost.com/news/saskatchewan/province-working-through-34-of-94-trc-recommendations>

Jan 18, 2016 | [Vote](#) 0

Smiths Falls asked to be part of Aboriginal reconciliation through tangible action

Smiths Falls Record News

By [Stacey Roy](#)

Smiths Falls resident, Christine Cutler is asking her town to stand along side her and support the equality of all children, including Aboriginal children on reserve by acting on three specific items.

Cutler describes herself as a community builder and a children and women’s advocate who is committed to reconciliation. During her Jan. 18 presentation to Smiths Falls town council Cutler asked the town to acknowledge the truth of residential school houses’ existence and the current need to improve funding for students on reserve by firstly passing a proclamation that acknowledges Canada’s past with Aboriginal peoples and commits to a future of mutual respect and responsibility. It was said reserve students are funded 20-30 per cent less than other Canadian students today because their funding comes from the federal government and not the province or territorial government.

“There are no short cuts. We are led to walk in a different way with each other,” Cutler told councillors on Monday night.

Mayor Shawn Pankow assured Cutler they will review the sample proclamation she provided to them at a future meeting. In thanking Cutler for speaking this week, the mayor said we, as Canadians, have to “acknowledge our past if we’re going to create a different future.”

Creating this future comes when all Canadians are educated on the facts around Aboriginal rights. The last residential school was closed in Canada in 1996. As a first step to gaining this education that was denied to most Canadian students, Cutler asked council members who were planning to attend this year’s annual Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) conference in Winnipeg this June to visit the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg where approximately 7,000 statements from residential school survivors are housed. It is estimated about five million items around this topic can be found there.

“I truly hope you will join me by supporting this,” Cutler added of the lost history lesson on Aboriginal welfare. “We now have the responsibility to get that information out.”

For about \$300 the town can do that in a most concrete way. An educational teachers’ treaty kit is available for purchase. In it there is a wealth of information that can be shared with students from kindergarten to Grade 12. Cutler would like to see the town buy a copy for the Smiths Falls Public Library so that the entire town has the opportunity to learn about the Aboriginal treaty in an age appropriate way. The message certainly reached council’s student representatives: Jane Ford and Alfred Rochefort who both expressed the emotional impact Cutler’s presentation had on them. Rochefort noted his teacher has spoken of reconciliation in his class before as a teachable concept.

“They believe in it and I believe in it, too,” Rochefort said.

Retired educator, Coun. Lorraine Allen thanked Cutler for her presentation, saying its hard not to be moved by the topic when it is discussed.

"I think we're all listening," Allen added. "Thank you for giving us a very concrete way to share this in our community."

She pledged to pass the treaty kit information over to Coun. Chris Cummings who sits on the library board.

Have A Heart Day

There are a multitude of ways individual citizens can actively take part in reconciliation. On Wednesday, Feb. 10 Cutler and countless other students and reconciliation supporters will gather at Parliament Hill in Ottawa to ask the federal government to remove the funding gap for reserve students thereby providing equal investment for all Canadian students.

"This is an event that has children standing for children on Parliament Hill," Cutler added. "I think this is an opportunity to do something that costs no money. It just costs good will and good heart."

Those who can't be on the hill that day may also sign the online petition to 'End the Gap in Funding for First Nations Schools' at www.change.org. or send a Valentine card supporting Have A Heart Day to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and your Member of Parliament at www.fncfcs.com/heart-a-heart.

Anyone who is looking for further information may contact Cutler at: christinecutler30@yahoo.ca.

Direct Link: <http://www.insideottawavalley.com/news-story/6237878-smiths-falls-asked-to-be-part-of-aboriginal-reconciliation-through-tangible-action/>

Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations

Montana program aims to help Native Americans quit smoking

By Amy Pholphiboun, Posted: Jan 15, 2016 10:45 AM MST Updated: Jan 15, 2016 10:45 AM MST



Program said to be the first of its kind in the U.S. (MTN News photo)

KALISPELL -Montana is leading the charge on a new program geared toward helping Native American's quite tobacco.

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services recently established

the commercial tobacco quit hotline with coaches who are specially trained to understand and balance cultural norms with Native American tobacco use.

Flathead County Health Promotion coordinator Leslie Diede says that a **2014 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance** report showed that more than 43% of American Indian adults smoked cigarettes as compared to about 18% of Caucasians.

This program, which officials say is the first of its kind in the nation, is unique in that it recognizes the varied influences Native Americans face.

"Definite difference in types of tobacco; Native Americans have used traditional tobacco for thousands of years and commercial tobacco is what we're trying to make sure that they can get assistance to help them quit. It's a different situation that requires a different level of coaching," Diede explained.

Participants will receive 10 free calls and eight weeks of nicotine replacement therapy free of charge. **Click here** to sign up for the program.

Direct Link: <http://www.kajl8.com/story/30976277/montana-program-aims-to-help-native-americans-quit-smoking>

Native American first battling addiction in Vet Court

Andrea Fisher, anfischer@greatfallstribune.com 9:02 p.m. MST January 15, 2016



Frank Damon started using methamphetamine at the age of 11. He'd never smoked pot or even a cigarette before giving hard drugs a try.

"That's life on the reservation," Damon, 31, said of his upbringing in Wolf Point, which is on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation.

He didn't realize how dangerous drugs had made his home until participating in the Montana 8th Judicial District Veterans Treatment Court as the first participant referred from federal court.

“I was one of the ones who were corrupting my own people,” Damon said.

That life of corruption caught up with Damon in the fall of 2014 when he was indicted in federal court for the theft of thousands of dollars from the Wolf Point Alco store, committed the previous year. Damon pleaded guilty to that single count through a plea agreement that led to a probationary sentence. He faced up to five years in federal prison for the charge.

But one factor on Damon’s side was his military service. It qualified him for Veterans Court when the program was opened up to federal participants, a major step in treating Native American veterans. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Tribal Government Relations, nearly 16 percent of Native Americans are veterans, compared to 9 percent of the general population.



Buy Photo

District Judge Greg Pinski, who runs the Veterans Court, said “My ultimate goal is to make inroads with the veteran population on the Indian Reservations.” (Photo: TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO)

“My ultimate goal is to make inroads with the veteran population on the Indian Reservations,” said District Judge Greg Pinski, who runs the Veterans Court.

The court is open to qualifying, justice-involved veterans with substance-abuse problems, mental health conditions or both. Damon has both.

It was the drive to enlist in the Marine Corps that prompted Damon to stop using meth at age 18. But, Damon said, he started drinking when he joined the fleet.

“A drug is a drug,” he noted matter-of-factly.

Much of Damon’s military service record is also contained in his court record, provided to the court before sentencing. He re-enlisted after four years and deployed to Iraq. In 2007, Damon was seriously injured when a fuel tank exploded in his face. He suffered burns and a traumatic brain injury.

Damon self-medicated with prescription drugs and alcohol. His addictions, injuries and issues with post-traumatic stress disorder led to the end of his military career. His discharge “devastated” him.

“I left guys there,” he said.

Damon suffered a second traumatic brain injury in a rollover crash upon his return home. He was ejected from the vehicle, but Damon still tried to run from the scene.

“I woke up in the hospital,” he said. “I just grabbed my pain meds and left.”

He mixed those pain meds with alcohol, then traded that cocktail for meth, which led to his trouble in Wolf Point.

In a sentencing memorandum submitted to the court, Damon’s attorney, Dana Henkel, wrote that her client accepted full responsibility for his crime and blamed no one but himself. Damon had no criminal history, according to the document, and his actions were fueled by his drug problem.

“He moved his family away from Wolf Point and stopped using drugs,” Henkel wrote, citing the Damon’s presentence report or PSR. “He did this without counseling or treatment, but the sheer force of will.”

Sheer force of will, though, couldn’t prevent Damon from relapsing, if he had actually stopped using in the first place.

“I was a master manipulator,” Damon said. “Drugs ran my life.”

Perhaps Damon manipulated both the author of the presentence report and his attorney to prompt these statements in the memorandum to the court:

“Mr. Damon has been a law-biding citizen in the two (2) years since the offense and has resolved to continue down his path of sobriety,” Henkel cited the PSR in this statement.

“A sentence of probation will not alter Mr. Damon’s deterrence. Given his lack of criminal history and his personal history and characteristics, he is not likely to re-offend. And a sentence that includes time on Supervised Release will ensure continued compliance with the law.”

Though Henkel made the recommendation for probation, she did note her client would require treatment to maintain his sobriety.

Damon received a four-year probationary sentence and was ordered to pay \$8,615.95 in restitution.

“I was in a dark place,” Damon said. He said he was using and selling drugs while on probation.

He formally admitted to using meth after his probation officer used several methods to prove that fact, including a “sweat patch” worn for two weeks and tested for banned substances. Damon said the patch “came back extremely positive.”

It took harsh words from his daughter and the threat of probation revocation for Damon to finally consider turning his life around and complete a form of treatment that worked.

“My daughter said, ‘Daddy, you’re sick. Time to man up,’” Damon said. “My daughter is 8 years old.”

A federal judge modified Damon’s probation to include a recommendation for Pinski’s Veterans Court. It was an option made available just months prior through a collaborative agreement between the federal and state district courts.

“To have the formal arrangement in place is really the first of its kind,” Pinski said.

Damon’s probation modifications also called for detention until an inpatient treatment facility could accommodate him. Damon spent several nights in jail in Butte.

“I was in, like, a mini coma sleeping off the meth.”

He followed that stay with a month-long stint at the Cascade County Detention Center before completing the Connections Corrections 60-day chemical dependency program.

“That program changed my life,” he said. “I began to value life again.”

Damon brought some of that change to Veterans Court with him when he started the program in November. But, even though he knew many people worked tirelessly to secure that spot for him in Pinski’s court, Damon said he didn’t completely buy into the program at first.

Damon and the other Veterans Court participants are required to participate in rigorous treatment plans and follow a long list of strict, court-mandated conditions during their time in the program. There is little idle time to think about using between work, therapy sessions, weekly court appearances and family obligations.

“They make sure you are well taken care of, but not to the point where you get complacent,” Damon said of the mentors, case workers, probation officers, counselors and other Drug Court staffers.

“Without them I would be gone. I would be in prison right now,” he said.

Pinski shares the same blunt message with all of his new participants in both Veterans Court and Adult Drug Treatment Court: “Prison is easier. This is work.”

“They’re not trying to hurt you,” Damon said. He admitted that was hard for him to see at first.

He describes himself as a work in progress, constantly battling to manage his addictive personality and manipulative tendencies. Those are his obstacles.

“Challenge accepted.”

Being the first federal participant places an additional weight on Damon’s shoulders.

The agreement that paved the way for his participation is already serving as a model for Veterans Courts in other parts of the country.

Pinski’s Veterans Court received a nearly \$300,000 grant in 2014 to build and expand. A team from American University in Washington, D.C., tasked with evaluating federal grant recipients used the Memorandum of Understanding between the state and federal courts as a template for the other programs.

Damon expressed the desire to graduate from Veterans Court, but admits his goal at this moment is smaller than that.

“Wake up tomorrow sober.”

Damon has accomplished that goal every morning for six months now.

“If you want this, you have to work for it. Anything you want in life that is good and worth living, you have to work for it. And they’re teaching me that.”

Direct Link: <http://www.greatfallsribune.com/story/news/local/2016/01/15/first-federal-vet-court-participant-battling-addiction/78833586/>

Dottie Smith: 1859 forced march of Native Americans to the Nome Lackee Reservation

Posted: Jan. 14, 2016

The year 1859 was a very dark year for Shasta County native people. By then, any semblance to their former way of living off the land in their native ways had disappeared. Massacres, extermination attempts, loss of their ancestral land and loss of their food sources had taken their toll.

By the winter of 1859, American Indians had nowhere to go, no food to eat and no way to stay warm. They were beginning to die in large numbers from starvation, the cold and sickness. In desperation, many went to Fort Crook, where they were given rations of food

and blankets and told to wait until they would be taken to a reservation. They had given up.

They were not alone. Other eastern Shasta County native people were being rounded up by the military and held as prisoners in anticipation of an eminent forced march to a reservation.

Gen. William Kibbe was in charge of the march. Stories of the march were written in detail and published in all the local newspapers. The settlers, the gold miners, the ranchers and the business owners were all happy the native people were leaving. But the natives were not happy in having to leave their homeland, where they and their ancestors had been living for thousands of years.

The following is taken from a story printed in the Shasta Herald newspaper on Dec. 3, 1859 when General Kibbe was leaving Millville with about 600 American Indians. It was titled "The Indian Exodus."

The article stated that Gen. Wm. Kibbe, having about 600 American Indians in charge, left the neighborhood of Millville on Cow Creek for the Tejon Reservation.

"We have always doubted the propriety of gathering up Indians and placing them on a reservation," the article states. "We are opposed to the Reservation system; however, since it is in operation, it may be as well to convey these Indians to one of them ...".

The article continues, "The Indians heretofore captured have been taken to the Mendocino, on the sea coast. Why a change of policy has been adopted and these Indians are to be packed off about 500 miles to the Tejon Reservation, we are not informed but presume it is thought the further they are conveyed away the better, and the least probability of their returning."

The article said moving American Indians to reservations "is a prolific subject for reflection."

"We know scores of these Indians. They have dug gold for us in the Pit River mines."

It continues, "A love of one's native land is the most powerful sentiment of the human heart, home and native country... Every one of these 600 Indians, who now take the departure, was born in these hills. To them, every hill and little valley, every meadow and wild nook in the mountains, and even the trees of the forest, have a familiar name known from childhood, and with them are linked the association of their whole lives, as also the legends that have come down from all the generations who here lived and died."

On the same date of Dec. 3, 1859, the short story shown below appeared in the Shasta Courier newspaper. The Shasta Courier was a weekly paper as was the above mentioned Shasta Herald. Since it would have been impossible for General Kibbe to have traveled with 600 prisoners on the same date from Millville to Cottonwood, I'm assuming the Shasta Herald wrote its story a week after the march began.

"General Kibbe arrived in Cottonwood on Thursday with his company in charge of upwards of 400 Pit River Indians. The war is ended. The Indians are by this time at Nome Lackee (in Tehama County)."

Dottie Smith is the former instructor of Shasta County History at Shasta College, the former curator of the Shasta College Museum and currently a part-time instructor at Simpson University. Contact her at historydottie@gmail.com.

Direct Link: <http://www.redding.com/lifestyle/columnists/dottie-smith/dottie-smith-1859-forced-march-of-native-americans-to-the-nome-lackee-reservation-2915557c-6fad-4bf9-365159141.html>

#OscarsSoWhite, Again: A Symptom of Hollywood's Racism

By: Jacqueline Keeler

This is the first time since 1998 that the Academy of Motion Pictures have not nominated a single African-American actor for two years in a row. | Photo: Twitter

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2

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Hollywood also continues to whitewash racially diverse American stories and reduce people like Native Americans to stereotypes. Once again, the 2016 Academy Award best acting nominations are all white – a repeat of 2015 despite widespread criticism expressed by the Twitter hashtag #OscarsSoWhite. But while reading about the Academy Award nominations, my thoughts turned to the tragic image of the late Misty Upham, a Native American actress of the Blackfeet Nation who appeared during the 2015 Oscars telecast in the “In Memoriam” montage while Meryl Streep looked on.

There was some criticism by members of the Academy about why she was remembered and not others. Some accused Meryl Streep – Upham’s cast mate from “August: Osage County” – of adding her young costar to the montage and displacing others. Indeed, Upham was never nominated for an Oscar in her short life but many felt that she was about to break out when she died in October of 2014 at the age of 32.

Over a year later, her death, like that of so many Native American women, remains unsolved.

This is the first time since 1998 that the Academy of Motion Pictures have not nominated a single African-American actor for two years in a row.

Even films like “Creed” and “Straight Outta Compton” which were viewed as Oscar contenders only garnered nominations for Sylvester Stallone and white writers Jonathan Herman and Andrea Berloff.

And, unsurprisingly, after 88 years there are still no Oscar nominations for Native American actors or filmmakers or writers.

Indians have been a part of Hollywood at least as long as the cowboy. But the struggle to disentangle our modern selves from the old storylines set up at the dawn of the medium of cinema continues into the 21st century.

For Upham, being able to act was a balm to so much pain: “Acting has saved me from darkness many times.” However, it was not enough. Despite working with Streep and Benicio del Toro and with Quentin Tarantino in Django Unchained, she struggled with inner pain, poverty, and mental illness.

After her death, her family found the Auburn, Washington, City Police Department unresponsive to their requests to search for her body. Family and friends organized a search after giving up on the police, and sadly, found her body at the bottom of a small ravine near her home.

Upham’s story is not unusual. Police oftentimes do not take seriously reports of missing Native American women and Federal authorities decline to prosecute in over 70 percent of reported cases on Native American reservations. Criminal justice studies find Native women are 2.5 times more likely than other American women to experience violent crimes and in some U.S. counties, Native women are 10 times more likely to be murdered. On top of this, nearly 70 percent of the men who commit violent crimes against Native women are not Native. Native women are

the only group of women in America more likely to be assaulted by men not of their own race. The statistics on murder and violence are equally alarming in Canada where First Nations women have been organizing under the hashtag #MMIW, "Missing and Murdered Women."

Yet, these painful stories and virtually every other type of story featuring Native Americans are not told by Hollywood. All filmgoers and tv watchers ever see, when they do see Native people on the screen, are stereotypes.

And in this past year since Upham died, in the new world of streaming Adam Sandler's "The Ridiculous Six" was produced by Netflix for \$60 million featuring threats of rape against Native women and the script originally featured graphic sexual jokes about Native women, who were either portrayed as over-sexed "squaws," dirty ugly "squaws" or as noble Indian princesses and given names like "Beavers Breath" and "Wears No Bra" – unnecessarily feeding negatives stereotypes about Native women. Extremely irresponsible considering the astoundingly high rates of rape of Native women by non-Native men.

That's what makes Leonardo DiCaprio's Golden Globes speech after his Best Actor win unique in many ways. The last time a Hollywood star of his stature used an awards show to draw attention to Indigenous issues was nearly 44 years ago in 1972 when Marlon Brando sent Native American actress Sacheen Little Feather to the podium to refuse his Academy Award for The Godfather in protest of Native American portrayals in film.

It should be noted that The Revenant features the rape of Native women as a plot point, but DiCaprio, whose advocacy for environmental issues is well-known, did not focus on Hollywood portrayals of Native people but asserted, "It is time we recognize your history and that we protect your indigenous lands from corporate interests and people that are out there to exploit them."

Kudos to "The Revenant's" Alejandro González Iñárritu, a Mexican director nominated for an Oscar for the level of detail he brings to authenticity and the truly stunning cinematography, but despite, this is yet another Hollywood film with white male protagonist. The Native American actors are simply ancillary to the story. This can be seen in pretty much every Hollywood film with Native Americans in it. From the Unforgiven, to Dances With Wolves, to television shows like Longmire.

And Native American comic Ryan McMahon, speaks for many Native American cinefiles when he asks in an article in Vice if, "it is time the world hear Indigenous voices ... why were there so few speaking roles for Indigenous people in The Revenant?"

This generation of Native Americans actors do not follow their dreams to Hollywood in order to continue to play buckskin and loincloth Potemkin villager parts that serve only to provide a backdrop to a white male actor's heroics. I agree with Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie when she said in her TED Talk that "The Danger of a Single Story" – that is, the world seen only from the perspective of the white male – is that, "it robs people of dignity. It makes our

recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar ... Many stories matter."

In light of this, I call for a moratorium on "buckskin and loincloth parts" until portrayals of Native people are balanced with those featuring modern Native American protagonists. We must get away from the portrayal of Native people as either savage warriors of the past, "Indian princesses" to be courted and conveniently killed off before giving birth to a Mestizo nation north of the Rio Grande, or as stoic stereotypes.

And when I call for modern roles I mean not just the odd, rich casino owner in "House of Cards," or an obnoxious tribal leader denying nice white characters the right to adopt an Indian baby, or even, the silent, perfect killer Indian in Fargo, the TV series.

Zahn McClarnon, the Lakota actor who plays cold-blooded, Native American killer Hanzee on "Fargo," expressed his frustration with the limited roles offered to Native American actors in an interview with New York Magazine. "I'd love a role where I'm playing a father, a loving husband, a relationship-based movie. A child and father, father-son kind of thing," said McClarnon. "I do a lot of that stuff in my classes I take, and I have a lot of fun doing it. Just being a human being and relating to another human being."

In this vacuum of diverse portrayals, it is no wonder that stereotypes are all most Americans know about Native people.

The result of this whitewashing of racially diverse American stories — both those based in the real world and those in fantasy — was found in a 2014 UCLA study to reduce minority representation in films by more than half. Racial minorities make up 40 percent of the population but only 17 percent of leads in films, while 83 percent of the lead actors in films are white.

America is rich in stories — embarrassingly so. Let's bring all the missing stories to the table and then we can begin to see each other as people.

That desire to share her story and her dreams is what drew Misty Upham to acting and for her to blurt out at theater camp at 12 years of age, "My name is Misty Upham, and someday you will know that name as the best living Native American actress."

She and every American child deserves the right to do so unhampered by stereotypes and an industry stuck on a single story.

Jacqueline Keeler is a Navajo/Yankton Dakota Sioux writer living in Portland, Oregon. She has been published in Salon, Indian Country Today, Earth Island Journal and the Nation. She is finishing her first novel "Leaving the Glittering World" set in the shadow of the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in Washington State during the discovery of Kennewick Man.

This content was originally published by teleSUR at the following address:

["http://www.telesur.tv/english/opinion/OscarsSoWhite-Again-A-Symptom-of-Hollywoods-Racism-20160115-0017.html"](http://www.telesur.tv/english/opinion/OscarsSoWhite-Again-A-Symptom-of-Hollywoods-Racism-20160115-0017.html). If you intend to use it, please cite the source and provide a link to the original article. www.teleSURtv.net/english

Corporations should listen to Leonardo DiCaprio on indigenous land rights

[Chloe Poynton](#)

January 15, 2016

Indigenous people in Cambodia have had their land sold to sugar and rubber barons without consent. (AP Photo/Heng Sinith)

When Leonardo DiCaprio won a Golden Globe on Jan. 10 for his work in “The Revenant,” he paid tribute to indigenous communities around the world. “It is time that we recognized your history, and that we protect your indigenous lands from corporate interests and people that are out there to exploit them,” he said. He’s right. The land of indigenous people needs to be protected, and governments and corporations need to make a commitment to do so.

Indigenous peoples live in more than 70 countries, including the United States, and represent approximately 5% of the world’s population. They remain among the world’s most [marginalized communities](#). Taken as a group, they have lower levels of literacy, higher rates of poverty and malnutrition, and less access to health services than other members of society.

Indigenous communities also experience higher rates of landlessness and displacement, which impedes their ability to ensure their economic well-being and cultural heritage. As the [United Nations](#) notes, “the survival and development of indigenous peoples’ particular ways of life, their traditional knowledge, their handicrafts and other cultural expressions have,

since time immemorial, depended on their access and rights to their traditional lands, territories and natural resources.”

Access to traditional land remains fundamental to the well-being of indigenous groups. But “land grabs” by governments and corporations are on the rise. In the last decade, national governments have sold over [81 million acres of land](#)—much of it indigenous—to foreign investors without the permission of those inhabiting the land. In Cambodia, for example, more than [400,000 indigenous peoples](#) have been forcibly evicted from lands since 2003 to allow for the production of rubber and sugar, and the construction of new properties. In Guatemala, in 2001, [760 indigenous families](#) were forced off of their land in Guatemala’s Polochic Valley to make way for sugar cane production.

These land grabs are in direct violation of internationally recognized human rights standards, including both [International Labor Organization Convention 169](#) on the rights of indigenous and tribal people, and the [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UNDRIP). Under Article 10 of UNDRIP, indigenous peoples have the right to not be forcibly removed from their lands. Any relocation must be contingent on the “free, prior and informed consent” of those inhabiting the land.

This right is essential to the protection of indigenous land and culture. It should be protected by states through national legislation—and respected by companies through their human rights due diligence activities.

As a consultant working with businesses on human rights issues, I often advise companies on how best to avoid complicity in land

grabs. Whether it is food and beverage companies whose suppliers may be growing produce on indigenous land without community consent, companies seeking to extract natural resources on indigenous land, or hotel companies expanding into growth markets where indigenous groups have historically claimed rights, businesses around the globe are increasingly faced with concerns regarding land rights.

In these cases, companies should take the following steps:

- Commit to respecting the land rights of indigenous communities and avoid causing or contributing to land grabs through **a public commitment or policy**.
- Conduct ongoing **human rights due diligence** to understand where current and potential risks lie.
- Commit, where the use of indigenous land is sought, to **respecting the principles of free, prior, and informed consent** and respect the decision of indigenous groups—whether they choose to provide consent *or not*.

This requires that the indigenous group's decision in each case be free from coercion, intimidation or manipulation. Prior to making any decision or action related to the land, companies need to ensure that affected indigenous communities have sufficient time to determine what is in the best interests of their community. And companies have to make sure that indigenous groups are informed of *all* relevant information related to the proposed activity, both through direct, inclusive engagement and by providing relevant documents, resources and studies.

It is only when all of these principles are met that an indigenous community is able to provide—or withhold—its consent.

There are positive examples of companies making changes to ensure respect for indigenous land rights. Oxfam's [Behind the Brands](#) campaign—which ranks ten of the world's largest food and beverage companies on their performance related to seven key issues, including land—led Coca-Cola, Nestle, and PepsiCo to commit to “zero tolerance” for land grabs throughout their supply chains. Coca-Cola followed their commitment up by undertaking nearly [30 independent third-party country studies](#) to understand land rights risks at a country level and [issuing guidance to their suppliers](#) on respecting land rights.

These steps should be applauded. But such corporate commitments should be the rule—not the exception.

Direct Link: <http://qz.com/595589/corporations-should-listen-to-leonardo-dicaprio-on-indigenous-land-rights/>

Culture Zones and Indigenous Identity

Duane Champagne

1/17/16

American Indians and other Indigenous Peoples are often classified as living within culture zones. An advantage of the cultural zone approach is that the indigenous nations within cultural zones live and engage in economy within similar ecological environments. North American culture zones include the Arctic regions, Plains, Southwest, California, and others. Peoples living in similar ecological zones will exploit their local environments and are confronted with similar challenges. Consequently, there are some economic and ecological similarities among the Indian peoples of a cultural area, and some cultural and economic patterns that are similar among the Indigenous Peoples of a particular cultural zone.

In terms of indigenous identity, few Indian tribes identify with a region. Rather Indigenous Peoples have specific creation teachings, kinship groupings, languages, ceremonial teachings, and other features that distinguish them from other tribes in a common cultural zone, and more broadly. Indigenous identities tend to be local and organized around villages or kinship groupings.

The traditional Cherokee, classified in the Southeastern Cultural zone, had numerous politically autonomous villages and seven clans that were present in almost all village areas. The Creek, also from the Southeastern cultural zone, lived next to the Cherokee, but had many more clans, and politically autonomous villages organized into two groups of “red” and “white” towns. The red and white designations can be understood as something like earth people (red) and sky people (white). The Cherokee and Creeks spoke different languages. Cultures varied significantly within cultural regions even though the various Indian nations exploited similar environments and ecologies. In terms of identity and history, indigenous people have chosen identity through common political, cultural and territorial location. In this way of classifying the indigenous world, there are many indigenous nations, each with very specific and different cultures, political organizations, kinship groups, and specific territories. The commonality of cultural zone or ecological environment does not predetermine Indians historical or cultural actions.

Many Indigenous Peoples in the U.S. and Canada are living on reservations, which do not enable the hunting and gathering, or horticultural, livelihood of historical cultural zones. Since most U.S. and Canadian Indigenous Peoples cannot exploit their local ecological environments in ways they traditionally have done, reservation life makes Indigenous Peoples depend on markets and/or government aid.

Contemporary classifications of cultural zones become less relevant, because the policies of the national government have greater day-to-day impact. Nation states and their policies toward Indigenous Peoples have become increasingly powerful influences over indigenous governments, land, economy, culture, and political identity. Today, if we want to understand the most pressing external impacts on indigenous nations we can look to nation states. What are nation state policies concerning Indigenous Peoples? Attitudes? Definitions of Indigenous Peoples? Favored Relations? Vision for the future?

Contemporary Indigenous Peoples can be grouped together as under the influence of a nation state. Indigenous Peoples still form nations with politically autonomous histories and governments. Now, however, nation states to a large degree greatly influence the political, economic, territorial, and cultural choices of Indigenous Peoples. Nation states have more powerful influence over Indigenous Peoples than do international organizations. In many ways, the United Nations is a coalition of nation states, and generally expresses and protects the common interests and views of nation states.

Nowadays, Indigenous Peoples can be classified by which nation state extends its policies and rules over them. United States, Canadian, and Mexican nation states have differing histories and policies toward their residence Indigenous Peoples. This is not to say the Indigenous Peoples are prisoners of nation states, but rather Indigenous Peoples are limited to making choices within the context of nation state political, economic, cultural and legal powers and influences. Ecological zones are still not without their impacts on Indigenous Peoples, but now national and international political relations, as well as national and international markets and cultures, play an increasingly powerful role in the futures and contemporary actions of Indigenous Peoples.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/01/17/culture-zones-and-indigenous-identity-162999>

Native American Groups Officially Respond To Leonardo DiCaprio's Call To Action

Representatives of the groups depicted in *The Revenant* spoke with BuzzFeed News about the actor's Golden Globes speech calling on listeners to “protect ... indigenous lands.”

posted on Jan. 15, 2016, at 5:16 p.m.

[Ariane Lange](#)



Leonardo DiCaprio *Frederic J Brown / AFP / Getty Images*

As he accepted his Golden Globe for dramatic acting on Sunday, Leonardo DiCaprio said that he shared his award with all the Native people represented in his new film *The Revenant*, and with “all the indigenous communities around the world.” The star tied Native land rights to environmental justice, [saying](#), “It is time that we recognize your history and that we protect your indigenous lands from corporate interests and people that are out there to exploit them. It is time that we heard your voice and protected this planet for future generations.”

Indigenous characters — in particular, Arikara and Pawnee characters — play significant supporting roles in *The Revenant*, in which DiCaprio's Hugh Glass seeks improbable revenge on another white man for killing his

Pawnee son. The film co-stars Native American actor Forrest Goodluck as Glass's son, Hawk, and First Nations actor Duane Howard as Elk Dog, among other Native characters who assist or antagonize DiCaprio's white protagonist. *The Revenant* also employed cultural consultants, and much of the dialogue in the film is spoken in the Arikara language.

At press time, DiCaprio was out of the country and could not respond to a request for a comment on how he plans to follow through on his call to action, his publicist said. But representatives of the indigenous groups portrayed in the film were enthusiastic about the actor's speech, and wondered what his next steps might be.

This week, Mark N. Fox, chair of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation, wrote to BuzzFeed News: "Mr. DiCaprio's words and support for our rights and the rights of all Indigenous nations are amazing and courageous. Like a man with true character, he is willing to challenge American Society where many others of influence fear to tread. His efforts both on and off the screen have brought honor to our Arikara, Hidatsa, and Mandan people. We look forward to allying with him in the struggle to promote truth and protect our rights as sovereign and Indigenous people!"

Fox said that DiCaprio has not formally met with the tribal government, but added that the MHA Nation would be extending a formal invitation to the actor to visit their homelands.

Adrian Spottedhorsechief wrote on behalf of the Pawnee Business Council, "Yes, it is long overdue. For so long, our stories of struggle and survival have not been heard. Different Tribal Nations as a whole are the forgotten people of this land. In today's time, when we fight or stand up against government and big companies, no one hears about our fight or hears our words."

Spottedhorsechief was pleased by DiCaprio's public broaching of indigenous issues, and hopes that "people will hear his words and [that] he himself will follow through."

A related observation was made by Native American studies scholar Adrienne Keene, Ph.D., who [pointed out](#) on Twitter that, while she appreciated the speech, "I'd rather it didn't take a Marlon Brando or a Leo DiCaprio to 'bring [attention]' to what we as Natives have been saying for generations." (Keene was referring to the 1973 Academy Awards, when Brando sent Sacheen Littlefeather to reject his Oscar for *The Godfather*.)

Other observers had harsher critiques: Assiniboine activist Lauren Chief Elk-Young Bear [tweeted](#) Sunday night, “I think that shoutout was him making Native people his mascot,” [noting](#) that he did not thank any groups or individuals specifically and instead relied on vague language that rendered all Native peoples a monolith. In a separate series of tweets the if “white saviorism.”



[@NativeApprops](#)

“The reason the Leo shout out was so remarkable to folks is that Native peoples are invisible,” Keene [tweeted](#). “It shouldn’t be revolutionary to call upon the peoples whose land you occupy, but it is.”

Before making the speech at the awards ceremony, DiCaprio and director Alejandro González Iñárritu were careful to involve indigenous cultural experts in the filmmaking process. Craig Falcon, the film’s cultural consultant and a member of the Blackfeet Nation, said Iñárritu consciously ensured that the film was “not exploitative.” Loren Yellow Bird taught DiCaprio the Arikara language, and advised on the culture as well, Falcon said. “[Iñárritu] wanted to do things very authentic,” Falcon told BuzzFeed News, adding that the consultation was an ongoing process that lasted throughout the shoot and extended to all manner of details, such as the feathers in the mane of a warrior’s horse.

While *The Revenant* was still in production last April, [Indian Country Today Media Network](#) reported contrasting circumstances on a very different film. The Native consultant — along with a group of extras — on Adam Sandler’s comedy *The Ridiculous 6* walked off its set in protest because they found the film misrepresentative of and offensive to Apache people. “I wasn’t allowed to talk to a producer and they wouldn’t allow me to talk to anybody,” the adviser, Bruce Klinekole, told [ICTMN](#). “I couldn’t say anything on behalf of my Native people or on behalf of my Apache people who were depicted so badly.”



Forrest Goodluck in *The Revenant*. Kimberly French / 20th Century Fox

Like Native Americans broadly, the indigenous tribes depicted in *The Revenant* have endured historical dispossession that is lesser-known in the mainstream. For example, in the 1960s, the Indian Claims Commission found in separate cases that the federal government owed millions of dollars to the four confederated bands of [Pawnee Indians](#) and to the [Mandan, Gros Ventre, and Arikara tribes](#): The initial sums paid for Native lands in 19th-century treaties were so far below market value that they were “unconscionable.”

The Pawnee Nation is now based in Oklahoma, after decades of encroachment and dispossession in the 1800s compelled them to accept relocation from the Great Plains.

Furthermore, the very venue at which the Golden Globes takes place — the Beverly Hilton — is a mere 10-minute drive from a former Tongva village that was home to indigenous inhabitants of the Los Angeles basin. According to the [California legislature](#), the Gabrielino-Tongva tribe signed one of 18 “lost” treaties with California Native groups. Theirs in 1851 guaranteed the tribe a reservation; however, the U.S. Senate refused to ratify this and 17 other treaties and placed these documents under an injunction of secrecy. The California bill states that the treaties were later discovered in a locked desk drawer in the United States Senate Archives in 1905, with the promise of a federal reservation never fulfilled.

Because *The Revenant* received [12 Oscar nominations](#) this week, including a Best Actor nod for DiCaprio, he may take up the stump again as awards season continues. Falcon believes DiCaprio will support the cause in more concrete ways: He said after the Golden Globes speech, he

joked to the director of his current project, “I think I really did a good job with brainwashing Leo and Alejandro over the last year.”

CORRECTION

The lede of this article has been changed to clarify that the people depicted in *The Revenant* were Native Americans, not First Nations people. Jan. 15, 2016, at 9:33 p.m.

Direct Link: <http://www.buzzfeed.com/arianelange/leonardo-dicaprio-golden-globes-native-americans#.yrE0322Jw>

Earrings help people hear voices of missing, murdered Native American women



Theresa Sheldon and Deborah Parker examine the earrings that are on display at the Hibulb Cultural Center through the end of this month.

— Image Credit: Kirk Boxleitner

by [KIRK BOXLEITNER](#), Marysville Globe Reporter

Jan 15, 2016 at 4:02PM

TULALIP — The earrings are beautifully crafted, but what they represent makes them difficult to look at.

That was the consensus on the evening before the "Sing Our Rivers Red" traveling earring exhibition opened to the public at the Hibulb Cultural Center.

The exhibit presents 1,181 single-sided earrings, each one representing a different Native American woman who's been reported murdered or missing in the United States or Canada.

"This helps us hear their voices," Tulalip Tribal board member Theresa Sheldon said Jan. 8.

Opening prayer drummer Jason Gobin agreed: "It's powerful to see all these earrings because of all the hurt and anger they represent, but this is the reality of what's happened."

Deborah Parker, former vice chairwoman of the Tulalip Tribes, is intimately familiar with this issue, as an advocate for the passage of the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act in 2012, and as a survivor of sexual assault and abuse herself.

"It's hard to even talk about," Parker said. "We might not always have the words, but we have to fight for those who cannot speak for themselves."

Parker had joined U.S. Sens. Patty Murray, Barbara Boxer and Amy Klobuchar in calling for tribal justice officials to be allowed to bring non-Indians who commit crimes against women on tribal lands to justice. Before VAWA was passed with this provision, federal prosecutors declined to prosecute a majority of sex abuse-related crimes in Indian country.

"I'd wondered since I was a little girl why indigenous women didn't receive the same protections as others," said Parker, who recalled seeing native girls as young as 14 on inner-city streets. "I was told not to get involved because that can hurt the victims of sex trafficking. I'd ask them if they wanted to come home with me, just for some pizza, but they couldn't."

Parker cited native women's significantly higher likelihood of committing suicide or being murdered, and asserted they shouldn't be condemned for any drug or alcohol problems.

"That shouldn't matter, because these are still human lives," Parker said. "These are still someone's daughters, and as much as anyone, their families need closure. Many of them don't know where their loved ones are."

Due to jurisdictional loopholes, Parker has heard many non-Indian prisoners tell each other that, if they rape a native woman on a tribal reservation, they can get away with it. It's only recently that this has begun to change, as more such cases are finally heard and prosecuted.

Citing the statistic that as many as one-third of indigenous women in North America are raped, Parker urged Native Americans and non-Indians alike to educate themselves and others.

"When we ask what we're going to do about this, it's tempting to say, 'I'm just one person. What can I do?'" Parker said. "You can talk about it, to your neighbors and relatives. You can keep speaking out about it, and teach your children to be respectful to each other. We can change this. We need to."

Returning to the earrings on display, Parker noted that they represent a mere fraction of the numbers of missing and murdered indigenous women in North America, with nearly 1,500 such cases recorded in Canada alone.

"It's okay to feel hurt," Parker said. "I'm angry, but I'm very hopeful."

The Tulalip Tribes are one of three tribal jurisdictions to pilot the implementation of VAWA provisions enabling the cross-jurisdictional pursuit of perpetrators with the aid of outside law enforcement agencies.

The "Sing Our Rivers Red" exhibit will remain at the Hibulb Cultural Center through the end of the month.

Direct Link: <http://www.arlingtontimes.com/community/365490771.html#>

Kansas indigenous group asking Kansas City Chiefs fans to stop the Tomahawk chop

Ariel Rothfield
5:37 PM, Jan 15, 2016



KANSAS CITY, Mo. - Stop the chop. As the Kansas City Chiefs prepare for Saturday's playoff game against New England, one indigenous group is asking fans to stop the famous Tomahawk chop.

"It's a stereotype, it's a fabricated notion," said Dr. Daniel Wildcat, an indigenous and American Indian studies professor at Haskell Indian Nations University.

In recent years, controversy has swirled around sporting teams, mascots and team traditions. Native American activists have demanded the Washington Redskins football team be renamed and Kansas City Chiefs fan refrain from dressing up.

"We do find it incredibly disrespectful when a non-native tries to dress up like a chief," Wildcat said. "It's an act. It's more than just putting on a hat."

Last year, the Chiefs partnered with the American Indian Center of the Great Plains to help honor traditions, including blessing the war drum hit before each game. Now,

Wildcat and others are hoping fans can change their ways.

“Those kinds of grotesque characters of who we are, are offensive to people who’ve struggled mightily in the United States to maintain cultural language, ceremony and song,” said Wildcat.

“Our culture was denied of us. It was beat out of us. It was told it was uncivilized, it was wrong,” said Lolita Ceja, a student at Haskell Indian Nations University.

Direct Link: <http://www.kshb.com/sports/football/chiefs/kansas-indigenous-group-asking-kansas-city-chiefs-fans-to-stop-the-tomahawk-chop>

Corinna Wolf explores Métis and Mennonite heritage through art

Corinna Wolf is working on her masters at the Univeristy of Saskatchewan

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 16, 2016 7:38 PM CT Last Updated: Jan 16, 2016 7:38 PM CT



A detail from I am Métis (2016) by Saskatchewan artist Corinna Wolf. (seewolf.com)

Corinna Wolf is a Saskatoon-based artist with a vibrant mix of cultural heritage to draw on for inspiration: Her mother is Métis and her father is Mennonite.

Wolf, who is studying at the University of Saskatchewan, is exploring both cultures in her paintings.

The exploration began, in part, because her childhood days were not filled with influences from either background.

"In my family, the compromise was made that no culture would be prevalent," Wolff told CBC Radio host Eric Anderson in an interview for the program *Saskatchewan Weekend*. "So, not the Métis or the Mennonite."

Wolff said that led to a deep interest in both cultures when, as an adult, she sought to understand her own identity.

"[I was] wanting to find these cultures and reconnect and to have my own cultural identity," she said, noting that the exploration of that was likely the best way for her to learn about both. "It was the right way. It gave me the opportunity to look at things as an adult ... instead of being indoctrinated or having them told to me at a very early age."

Wolff said her art resonates with themes from both cultures.

"My artwork is all about identity and transformation," she said. "It is very much rooted in exploration of identity."

She said her current project is drawing from traditional aspects of Métis beading.

"I'm looking at contemporary Métis artists, such as Christi Belcourt and David Garneau, and I'm using that visual aesthetic to explore my own identity," she said.

She also draws on her Mennonite background to further ground her art in her own history.

"On the Mennonite side, the Mennonites have their own visual aesthetic," she said. "They have quilting, incredible woodwork — lots of things that I can incorporate into my artwork."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/corinna-wolff-metis-mennonite-artist-1.3407261>

Grocery becomes first Native-owned business in Whiteclay

- [Tom Griffith Journal staff](#)

- 8 hrs ago

- 2



PINE RIDGE | When Martin Pilcher was a boy growing up in the New Crazy Horse community a couple miles south of the reservation on the road to Whiteclay, Neb., he and his young friends would do their best to avoid Highway 407.

Whether on horseback or on foot, the youngsters were leery of the roadway, and would reluctantly sneak across the tarmac only to reach the cool creek on the other side.

“We would stay away from it as much as possible,” Pilcher said last week. “So many people drove to Whiteclay to get beer and there were a lot of accidents on that road. So

many died on that highway. We had to walk across it to get to the creek, but we would really hustle."

Not much has changed in Whiteclay.

Even today, its dozen residents and four liquor stores sell an average of 13,000 cans of beer each day, quenching the thirst of many residents of the nearby Pine Ridge Reservation, among others. Despite an August 2013 vote that set aside a 124-year ban on alcohol sales, in large measure the reservation remains dry, keeping Whiteclay in tall cotton when it comes to beer sales.

First Native-owned

But the town's newest entrepreneur and, by some accounts, possibly Whiteclay's first Native American business owner, isn't planning to add to the problems of local residents suffering from the scourge of alcoholism. Even if Whiteclay's four on-sale establishments didn't hold all the available licenses, which they do, Pilcher, the proud new owner of Arrowhead Foods, said he'd probably forego selling any type of booze purely on principle.

"It's a grocery store, not a bar," said the 43-year-old father of four. "I'm more family-oriented and family-driven."

Pilcher bought the 3,000-square-foot store in December with the help of an alliance of two tribal organizations and a Gordon, Neb., bank. Since then, he says he's worked from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. nearly every day, figuring orders, managing inventory, handling paperwork, stocking shelves, monitoring eight employees and otherwise learning the fine art of the grocery business.

"We cook a lot of chicken and we even cater," said Pilcher. "I think the tribe and our people have been pretty supportive and we've been really busy. We get a lot of compliments."

Pilcher is no stranger to hard work. He and Rhiannon, his wife of 16 years, have owned and operated Pine Ridge Builders for three years, and Pilcher earned his license as an insurance agent a couple years ago. Before he turned to a life of contracting, insurance and groceries, Pilcher spent 15 years teaching in the Pine Ridge school system.

Although he said he never really contemplated being the lone Native-owned business in Whiteclay, Pilcher estimated 95 percent of his customers were Native Americans.

"I don't know if it's important to my people," he said. "But in the past, Whiteclay has been all about beer sales and people on the street, the only real picture that the world gets to see. They don't see the good things that are happening in Whiteclay. It's not all beer and drunks."

Lending alliance

While others saw only the hopelessness of social ills painted on the faces of those huddled up in Whiteclay's abandoned buildings or asleep on its streets, Pilcher saw an opportunity for community revitalization. He pointed to the town's other stores, an auto dealership and repair shop, and a new multi-million-dollar nursing home being built by the Ogalala Sioux Tribe as evidence of a vibrant community growing ever more secure in its future.

But Pilcher said he could not have realized his entrepreneurial dream without the help of three organizations that financed his purchase of Arrowhead Foods.

He initially approached the Lakota Fund, a Native community development financial institution located on the Pine Ridge Reservation, to obtain capital that would transform his vision into a successful business. As an organization that had provided more than \$6 million in financing to hundreds of businesses since 1986, Lakota Fund was well-versed in navigating the risks associated with lending in very low-income communities.

However, Pilcher's request for \$300,000 to purchase the commercial building in Whiteclay topped out the fund's loan limit. Undeterred, Lakota Fund Executive Director Tawney Brunsch and Loan Officer Tony Taylor approached Mazaska Owecaso Otipi Financial, a Native finance group located in Pine Ridge that provides housing loans. Mazaska subsequently agreed to partner in a participation loan for the deal on the Whiteclay building, which included a five-bedroom residence behind the store.

With two of the three pieces of the loan puzzle in place, Taylor said Pilcher needed only a line of credit to purchase his initial inventory, something required by the food distributor with whom Pilcher had contracted. After several months of work, a prospective lender backed out at the last minute, jeopardizing the project, Taylor said.

"We really scrambled for that final piece of the puzzle," said Taylor. When the potential lender rejected the deal, Taylor said he immediately thought of The First National Bank in Gordon, with which he had worked on other projects.

"I suggested to Martin that he might want to try First National, and within 15 minutes he had contacted their loan officer," said Taylor. "They approved it within 10 minutes. The next day or the following day he had the line of credit in place. That's the kind of people they are."

First National Senior Vice President Valerie Mann dismissed the contention that her bank approved the line of credit on 10 minute's notice and said she and her associates had in fact been watching the project develop since its inception.

"We were actually at the beginning of the process and referred Martin to the Lakota Fund," Mann said. "While it may appear to have been a quick decision, we actually had been keeping a close eye on the transaction."

Mann said her bank was encouraged by Pilcher's work ethic, new projects in and around Whiteclay, and a "Buy Native" resolution passed by the Ogalala Sioux Tribe late last year that stated the tribe's intent to buy from Native-owned vendors whenever possible, a move that "we knew would lead to even more business for Native-owned operations."

"Whiteclay has a lot of potential and many opportunities, including the new nursing home which will serve elders of the reservation, businesses that are providing housing in Whiteclay for people working in Pine Ridge, great Christian foundations, and several positive things behind the normal sensational headlines associated with Whiteclay," Mann said.

"It seemed a Native owner of a grocery store that close to Pine Ridge would make a lot of financial sense," she added. "And Martin had a history of innovation prior to this, with his contracting business and insurance agency. He also has incredible family support and for a small business owner, that's extremely important."

Role model

With all the pieces in place, Pilcher signed the loan documents Dec. 2 at the Gordon bank, and then took over the store and deli. Taylor said a lesser man, facing such lending hurdles, may have bailed far earlier in the process.

"Martin's ambitious and he does things right," Taylor said. "He showed the gumption to get through it."

While alcoholism and dependency issues in Whiteclay and on the reservation "get all the ink," Taylor said he remained hopeful that Pilcher's determination and success would set an example for younger tribal members and change outside perceptions.

"He was the ideal client for the Lakota Fund," Taylor said. "We're aware of the negative press about Whiteclay and the reservation in general. But Martin's character and this Native-owned business have positioned him to be a positive role model."

"This sends a very positive message — a Native-owned store employing tribal members in what is considered a blighted area," he added.

For his part, Pilcher said if he could motivate even one reservation resident to challenge themselves and understand that they could start a successful small business, all of the effort will have proven worthwhile.

"I want my people to know this is possible," he said from his store, where a phone was ringing in the background. "We have the power to make our community a better place."

Direct Link: http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/grocery-becomes-first-native-owned-business-in-whiteclay/article_355d0a3e-baa9-501d-aea8-3df71c1b4540.html



A recipe for Nopales de Colores from *Decolonize Your Diet: Plant-based Mexican-American Recipes for Health and Healing* by Luz Calvo & Catriona Rueda Esquibel. Published by Arsenal Pulp Press, 2015. Tracey Kusiewicz / Foodie Photography / Tracey Kusiewicz / Foodie Photography

Many people will do a hard reset on their diets this winter. The combination of holiday excess and New Year's anxiety will send some all the way back to the stone age - some may finally try the [Paleo Diet](#) that has been crowding their friends' social media feeds in between [Crossfit](#) status updates.

Yet according to [Luz Calvo and Catriona Rueda Esquibel](#), authors of *Decolonize Your Diet: Plant-Based Mexican-American Recipes for Health and Living*, it might not be necessary to go so far back. Partners and colleagues who teach ethnic studies with an emphasis on Latino populations at different Bay Area universities, Luz and Catriona set out to find what was wrong with their otherwise healthy diets when Luz was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2006.

"For me and for us as a couple, it produced a crisis around food," explains Luz. "After I got through the treatment, I was trying to figure out how to recover and prevent the cancer from coming back."

They soon discovered that many traditional, Meso-American ingredients that had fallen out of their diets over successive generations in the United States had the very nutrients they were looking for to aid Luz's healing. The result is [Decolonize Your Diet](#), which questions everything that has shaped the standard American diet since Columbus. The finds solutions in the nutrient-rich plants, fruits and vegetable that have been growing in the Americas all along. We spoke to Luz and Catriona about what "decolonizing your diet" can mean for your health and the troubling paradox at the heart of it - here's our edited interview.

What was the initial impulse behind writing this book?

Luz: We started doing a lot of research on Latinas and breast cancer and discovered the critical fact that foreign-born Latinas have a 50 percent lower risk of breast cancer than US-born Latinas. As we delved further in the literature, we found that the longer you live in the United States, the higher risk you have of breast cancer for those who are immigrants. The higher education level you have or if you're English speaking versus Spanish speaking, the higher your risk of breast cancer. That was really curious to us. We hadn't heard that before, and we were trying to figure out what they meant at a personal level, as a highly educated, PhD, US born person, who is of Mexican descent.

We started thinking about food and comparing the way immigrants eat versus the way U.S.-born Latinas eat and researching foods that we remembered our grandparents talking about that we no longer ate like quelites, verdolagas, and nopales. We found out there were really healthy and traditional plants that have strong anti-cancer properties. That's where we started.

Luz Calvo and Catriona Rueda Esquibel, authors of the book "Decolonize Your Diet: Plant-Based Mexican-American Recipes for Health and Healing." Tracey Kusiewicz / Foodie Photography

Are there any negative trends in the traditional Mexican diet as it adapts to life in the United States that explains the Latino/a immigrant paradox you describe in the book?

Catriona: Working-class people tend to eat beans more often and as people become more financially successful they eat beans less. Because beans are very high in fiber and minerals and stabilize blood sugar, taking this important component of the diet out makes for a big change in health outcomes.

Luz: When it comes to Latinos, it's our recent immigrants, who are living for the most part under difficult circumstances, that have really good health. We think that we can switch the table and say that this knowledge that they have and this way of life that they bring with them is critical cultural knowledge that we need to listen to, gather, respect, disseminate and value.

What does it mean to decolonize your diet?

Luz: We're calling not just for people to change the way they eat personally but for a change in the food system. Part of decolonization is recognizing our indigenous ancestry and the knowledge that persists in the recipes that were passed down from generation to generation. The recipes for tamales date back from way before the conquest.

There is other indigenous knowledge that a lot of us have lost contact with and that's about having a relationship to the land. That respect needs to be extended to other human beings as well, to the people who farm the land, prepare our food, serve our food. We have to rethink our relationship to each other so it's based on respect. We are calling all of that into a question.

You often highlight the color of foods your choosing. What is the logic behind eating in color?

Catriona: Dark, leafy greens are really high in iron. Foods that are orange like carrots, sweet potatoes and pumpkins are high in beta carotene. Every color has nutrient properties that are associated with it. It's not about including vegetables but including a variety of vegetables and different flavors in each dish.

Luz: Beyond the vitamins, there are phytonutrients in each plant - I know if I'm eating a wide variety of different colored fruits and vegetables in season, I'm getting as many as possible. As messed up as it was to go through the whole cancer experience, it made me so much more in touch with my body. I eat what is in season, savor it, and I feel how good it feels in my body. If I do cheat, there's a big incentive not to do it because it actually feels like poison.

Diet is a loaded word for most people. What do you hope people gain by "decolonizing" their diet?

Catriona: One thing is to rethink their relationship to Mexican food. The original foods were inherently healthy and delicious but they've been stretched and changed for no reason. There's a way in which particular immigrants have been shamed for their foods and told it wasn't healthy.

In the US, that has gone on for centuries. In the 1920s, they told Mexicans they shouldn't serve their children corn tortillas but white bread instead. The idea was that they needed to become Americanized and eat American food and that somehow that was better and it was progress.

To recognize that traditional foods were extremely healthy and continue to be so and bring that back into your diet, even just a little bit, will make a tremendous difference.

Direct Link: <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/eat-healthier-looking-our-indigenous-ancestors-say-latina-authors-n494251>

Crimes against Native American women raise questions about police response

Local activists in Minnesota say deaths and disappearances of Native women are linked to human trafficking and that police aren't taking the issue seriously



A boat on Lake Superior, off Duluth. The international port there has served as a hub for commercial sex for decades, activists say.

Photograph: Zoe Sullivan for the Guardian

Zoe Sullivan in Duluth, Minnesota

Tuesday 19 January 2016 15.10 GMTLast modified on Tuesday 19 January 201616.48 GMT

A recent spate of cases involving Native American women from northern [Minnesota](#) being murdered or going missing has raised questions about how seriously such disappearances are taken by the police and other authorities.

As Duluth, Minnesota, marks trafficking awareness month, local activists say some of the disappearances and deaths are linked to this issue, and argue that the invisibility of the Native American population contributes to neglect by police, media and social services and point to the need for better data collection in order to track the number of missing and murdered women.

Three Native American women have been killed and two more have disappeared from northern Minnesota since May last year.



Two other Duluth women went missing, one of whom has since been found, while the other, Sheila St Clair, 48, has not. In April, a third Minnesota woman, Edith Chavez, was abducted in North Dakota, but managed to escape.

“I think a lot of disappearances of young women can be tracked back to some sort of trafficking,” Patti Larsen of [Mending the Sacred Hoop](#), an organization focused on ending violence against Native women, said.

Chris Stark, a researcher focusing on sex trafficking on the ships in Duluth’s port, agreed. “There’s a connection between like the reservations and places like Bemidji and Duluth and the Twin Cities [Minneapolis/St Paul] in terms of the trafficking and prostitution routes that are run,” he said.

“It’s definitely an issue, and even the Native teenage girls that are being recruited or groomed from the Duluth area to go out to the Bakken.”

The Bakken is an oil-rich area in western North Dakota that attracted tens of thousands of male workers within a few years to respond to the oil boom there in the late 00s.

Advocates such as Larsen and Stark contend that Native women and girls represent an easy target for traffickers who seek to recruit them into commercial sex work. According to federal data, Native women are twice as likely to be sexually assaulted as women of other races. They are

also subject to [high rates of intimate-partner violence](#) and other forms of violence. These factors, along with poverty, substance abuse and foster care, can make them vulnerable to exploitation.

One result of such vulnerability, advocates say, may be that Native women are disproportionately drawn into trafficking compared to other groups. A 2007 review of probation records from North Minneapolis found that 24% of the women charged with prostitution in that area were Native American, yet they [only comprised only 2.2% of the population](#).



Patti Larsen of Mending the Sacred Hoop, an organization focused on ending violence against Native women. Photograph: Zoe Sullivan for the Guardian

Thirty miles west of Duluth, amid snow-custed pine trees and meadows, lies the Fond du Lac reservation. For Nikki Crowe, 44, a resident of the reservation, there are common misconceptions. “Most of the time trafficking isn’t like the movie version of trafficking where a child is snatched off the streets. It’s more like, we’ve already been [violated] in so many ways, from historical trauma, to the addiction, to the sexual abuse that we don’t talk about as communities, to the things that have happened at the boarding schools and the breakdown of our communities and our families.

“We’re already so vulnerable that perpetrators see that we’re so easy to victimize. So it might just be a man saying the things that we want to hear that lead us away.”

Native American women also face the challenge of being believed by authorities.

Last April in Casselton, North Dakota, Edith Chavez, 38, of Tower, Minnesota, was abducted and, she suspects, drugged for a few days before [managing to escape from the back of her abductor’s car](#) when she found him absent.

When Chavez arrived at the police station in Williston, North Dakota, she says officers refused to take a statement, and instead checked her own record. They arrested her for an unpaid traffic ticket dating from 2011 and detained her overnight in a holding facility before transferring her to a jail in Minot, North Dakota. There, a female officer recognized something was wrong, had Chavez’s charges dismissed and gave her directions to the closest hospital.

The Williston police department did not respond to requests for comment. But it issued a press release in June claiming Chavez had smelled of alcohol and had been to a casino, points not noted in the day log or the Uniform Incident Report registering Chavez’s arrest.

“It’s pretty much ignored when Native women go missing,” said Carmen O’Leary, who runs the [Native Women’s Society of the Great Plains](#), a tribal coalition that focuses on issues of domestic violence, sexual assault and sex trafficking.

She cited the examples of [Robin Fox](#), who was found dead after going missing

“If there had been an immediate search, they might have found her before she died” – and [Vicki Eagleman](#), a mother of five. “She was found, deceased, after 30 days of being missing and nobody willing to

take a report.” (O’Leary said she didn’t believe either case was related to trafficking.)

Duluth police officer Kim Wick said she received hundreds of missing person reports each year, yet the way the department processes its data made it challenging to identify how many cases involved Native women, and how many were connected to trafficking. The department recently received a grant to support Wick’s work by providing another officer who will focus on minors and help organize the relevant data.

“There’s a lot of kids who don’t get reported,” said Wick. “The victim-survivors are isolated.

“It’s part of the grooming process, and they can be transient, so they often go unreported.” Further complicating matters, Wick said many women involved in commercial sex have had negative experiences with law enforcement officials and are thus unlikely to seek help from police.

While tough conditions on reservations may be one factor pushing women into trafficking, Larsen said that disappearances and trafficking often coincide with other phenomena such as gang activity on reservations, oil drilling in North Dakota or ships entering Duluth’s international port. “Follow the pipeline through, you follow the construction workers, you follow the money, you follow the oil – you’ll start seeing where the trafficking will follow that,” she said.

Duluth’s international port on Lake Superior has served as a hub for commercial sex for decades, said Stark, taking advantage of the proximity of low-income Native women from surrounding reservations. “It is like a built-in pool of women who’ve had a lot of barriers in their lives: educational barriers, racism, high rates of homelessness.”



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Duluth, Minnesota. Three Native American women have been killed and two more have disappeared from northern Minnesota since May last year. Photograph: Zoe Sullivan for the Guardian

She says that hunger often pushed these women to accept invitations to “parties” on the ships. Stark said that the parties were presented as a good time with lots of food and drink, but that women were not always aware that they would be expected to provide sexual services. What’s more she said, the “parties” could have even more serious consequences. “[The sailors] will ply [the women] with alcohol, and they’ll wake up and they’ll be on their way to Thunder Bay [in Canada] listening to someone talking about who they’re going to sell them to.”

While Larsen and others in Duluth said that trafficking on the ships had decreased since security was tightened in the port after 9/11, they did not believe that it had been eliminated entirely.

At a recent hearing in Thunder Bay on indigenous women’s safety, more than one family presented concerns about female relatives who disappeared after visiting the ships, according to Canadian indigenous affairs minister Carolyn Bennett. “Like we’d heard during Idle No More [a Canadian movement for indigenous rights], they [indigenous women] went to the ships, [then they disappeared](#).”

After years of pressure from First Nation groups, in 2014 [Canada released a report](#) that found that 1,017 First Nation women had been murdered and 164 had gone missing between 1980 and 2012.

In Duluth, Nigel Perrote of PAVSA, a local organization focused on eliminating sexual violence, cautioned that not all disappearances were linked to trafficking. “If they’re involved in a domestic situation and they know that the tribal police or the county police are not stepping in to protect them, they may see their only way out as leaving and going to another area.”

Yet he also agreed with O’Leary that when Native women did disappear, their cases were often overlooked. “When you look at the media, often times it’s a white woman, often times younger and college-aged that is getting the attention, and not a middle-aged Native woman who may have a criminal history because I think people can relate more to [the young woman]; whereas maybe they can’t relate to a Native person or pretty much any person of color that has gone missing.”

Adele Yorde, a spokeswoman for the port in Duluth, acknowledged that disappearances and trafficking disproportionately affect the Native community, but said that the port was trying to eliminate trafficking on the water and to help raise community awareness. It is part of Duluth’s sex-trafficking taskforce, and held a training exercise last year with 65 terminal operators and their security staff to identify potential trafficking situations.

“It’s difficult in an industry that hasn’t heard any charges brought, any active investigations opened, to know that there is anything going on,” she said. “But if there are stories being told, [we are] trying to discern what are some of the issues of 2001 and before, and what are some references that are still being made. So we’re really working hard to stay part of the dialogue.”

Direct Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/jan/19/minnesota-native-american-women-trafficking-police>

‘Talking Canoe’ display brings the past to life in Clifford Twp.

BY JOSH MCAULIFFE

Published: January 19, 2016



BUTCH COMEGYS / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER The Clifford Twp. Historical Society's Native American canoe display now comes with an interactive audio and visual component. Project participants include, from left, Sarah McLain, Michelle Jaconia McLain, Pat Peltz, Sandy Wilmot and Andrew Wildenberg.



Several years ago, the Clifford Twp. Historical Society received a great gift in the form of a well-preserved 300-year-old Native American canoe pulled from nearby Mud Pond.

The historical society then paired the canoe with a vibrant 20-foot mural of Native American life painted by local artist Michelle Jaconia McLain.

But the display still needed something.

“Michelle did such a good job on this mural, I wanted to bring it up to the highest level possible,” said historical society president Sandy Wilmot.

What it needed, it turned out, was a little modern technology.

The historical society now refers to the exhibit as the “Talking Canoe,” thanks to the recent addition of an audio and visual presentation for the canoe, which is on display in the historical society’s Museum of Local History located in the Clifford Community Center.

The museum is open to the public on the third Sunday of every month from 1 to 4 p.m. Appointments also can be scheduled.

Work for the display was paid for through grants provided by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Bradford County Regional Arts Council and the Lackawanna Heritage Valley National and State Heritage Area in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the National Park Service. Counting a donation from Adams Cable Service and money from the historical society itself, the project received about \$3,000 in funding, according to Mrs. Wilmot.

With the money, the historical society was able to hire two Olyphant businesses — Magdon Music to provide the display’s lighting and JL Studios for the audio.

The result is a 20-minute presentation that features Native American educator Frank Little Bear providing narration about the canoe and Indian life in the Clifford area. There’s also traditional Native American flute music, and a number of animal sounds collected by historical society volunteer Andrew Wildenberg that play over the speakers as the display’s lighting spotlights different facets of Mrs. McLain’s mural.

Mrs. Wilmot sat in on the recording sessions at JL Studios a few months back.

“It was a challenge for them because they had never done anything quite like this before either,” she said. “I said, ‘I want this squirrel to squeak longer than that.’ And, ‘I want this girl to giggle longer than that.’ I walked out of there in tears because it was like, ‘It worked, we got it!’ When something comes out better than you imagined it, it’s a really cool feeling.”

LHV board member Bob Savakinus called the display “state of the art.”

“It promotes historical preservation. It shows the importance of the artifact to our area. And there’s an educational aspect as well,” he said. “This is an artifact in our area that you couldn’t find anywhere else. It’s a unique piece.”

Historical context

The dugout pine canoe was discovered in 1976 when the pond was dammed. Constructed in the 1690s, it was left there by one of several tribes that came to the area near Elk Mountain during the summer months to collect food.

In 2008, local couple Jim and Valerie Cole donated the canoe to the historical society. The historical society encased it in Plexiglas and set it upon rocks that were washed in Clorox to ensure nothing potentially damaging could get into the wood, historical society director Pat Peltz said.

To complement the exhibit, the historical society commissioned Mrs. McLain to paint a mural depicting a tranquil scene of Native Americans congregating around the pond.

For months, she painted the mural's panels with acrylics at her home studio in Greenfield Twp. She used her kids as models for the Native American children in the painting, and did extensive research on Native American life.

"Every night before bed I would go on the Internet and search all this information and then paint it on the mural," she said. "I tried to depict (the Native Americans) and honor them in a way that they deserved."

The canoe is just one of many elements of the two-room museum. Other highlights include a blacksmith shop display, a replica of an early 20th century Clifford farmhouse, a horse-drawn wagon, a dog treadmill, a hair wreath made for a dead child's casket, and a fire tower map dating to the mid-1850s.

And the museum is not the only prized possession of the historical society. The group also renovated the one-room Hoover School, established an agricultural museum at the Clifford Twp. Volunteer Fire Company's picnic grounds, and is in the process of bringing the Yarns Cider Mill back to operational condition.

Mrs. Wilmot believes the canoe's interactive component will make the museum more of a destination for history buffs from Northeast Pennsylvania and beyond. With that in mind, the group is looking for more volunteers to serve as docents.

The Talking Canoe, Mrs. Wilmot said, is "as interesting as it is important."

"When you're doing a good project, and you have good people, you end up with a good product," she said.

Contact the writer:

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@jmcauliffeTT on Twitter

If you go

Details: The "Talking Canoe" display at the Clifford Twp. Historical Society's Museum of Local History is open to the public on the third Sunday of every month from 1 to 4 p.m. The museum also can be toured by appointment by emailing Sandy Wilmot at swilmot@echoes.net, or Pat Peltz at peltz@nep.net. The museum is located inside the Clifford Community Center, 119 Cemetery St., Clifford Twp.

For more information, visit the

historical society's website at

cliffordtownshiphistoricalsociety.org.

Direct Link: <http://thetimes-tribune.com/lifestyles/talking-canoe-display-brings-the-past-to-life-in-clifford-twp-1.1996723>

Future of Tewksbury Redmen mascot up for debate



MATTHEW HEALEY FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE/FILE 2015

A Facebook group of supporters of the Redmen mascot has attracted more than 1,400 members.

By Emily Sweeney GLOBE STAFF JANUARY 19, 2016

For decades, athletes at Tewksbury Memorial High School have called themselves Redmen, proudly wearing sweat shirts and jackets that display the nickname or image of a Native American in a feathered headdress.

But when Linda Thomas's children came home from elementary school with forms to order Redmen apparel, she balked.

“I just couldn’t do it. I didn’t feel like it was right,” said Thomas, who moved to Tewksbury six years ago. “I’ve been uncomfortable with having that as the town mascot.”

Spurred by Thomas and another parent, Superintendent of Schools John E. O’Connor has scheduled a public forum Jan. 27 to discuss whether it is time for a change.

Supporters are rallying behind the mascot, however, joining a Facebook group called “REDMEN . . . HERE TO STAY” and buying T-shirts to wear at the upcoming meeting, which begins at 6 p.m. at the high school.



[View Story](#)

Dedham High weighs rebranding its image

Team mascots regularly trigger controversies, but a number of schools are reluctant to let go of their traditional monikers.

“What makes it special is that for us, it’s always been a symbol of pride and tradition and sportsmanship and teamwork,” said Heidi DeSisto,

who graduated from Tewksbury High in 1989 and now has children in the school system. “I want my kids to be able to be Redmen.”

DeSisto, whose Facebook group has attracted more than 1,400 members, said the Redmen name and logo have always been viewed by locals in a positive light. She said she has reached out to Native Americans in the area and “haven’t found anyone offended by it.”

“It has a long history in the town,” she said. “It’s our logo, it’s what we go by. It’s never been a question to anyone.”

Colleges and high schools across the country have come under increasing pressure in recent years to drop their Native American-themed mascots. In November, the German sneaker company adidas announced it would offer design resources and financial assistance to schools that wish to create new identities and rebrand themselves. (Participating schools must sign a three-year commitment to buy adidas products.)

After Thomas read about the adidas offer, she and another resident e-mailed the superintendent and aired their objections to the Redmen name at a School Committee meeting in December.

“As a result of that, I decided to host a forum to give residents an opportunity to weigh in on the logo issue,” O’Connor said. He also plans to conduct a poll of students in February, and will present his findings and recommendations to the School Committee in March or April. “This is a very personal issue for lots of people,” he said.

Approximately 40 high schools in Massachusetts still use Native American mascots, nicknames, or logos, according to Peter Sanfaçon, founder of the New England Anti-Mascot Coalition.

There still are a number of Indians, Warriors, and Sachems, in addition to the Algonquin Tomahawks and the Braintree Wamps.

In 2008, Natick High School dropped its Redmen nickname and became the Red and Blue. Many protested, and in 2012 students at the high school voted to switch to the Redhawks. Still, some Natick residents and alumni longed for the old nickname, and a group of diehard fans launched a website called www.redmenforever.org.

In Tewksbury, Anne Seichter would like to see the Redmen name dropped. Born and raised in town, she graduated from Tewksbury High in 1999, and understands that her hometown is attached to the name.

“We’re very proud of our Redmen,” she said. “Football was always big in our town. I totally understand the pride that goes with it, and the honor.”

But when she heard about the push to change the name of the Washington Redskins, and other schools moving away from Native American mascots, she began thinking it was time for Tewksbury to change, too.

“It’s a nationwide issue,” she said. “Now that we know better, we can do better. . . . We kind of need to get with the times.”

Tom “Eagle Rising” Libby, who lives in Lowell and serves as chief of the Greater Lowell Indian Cultural Association, said the move by Tewksbury school officials to hold a public forum to discuss the issue is “a good thing.”

As far as the Redmen term goes, Libby said it “bothers me just a little bit” and “it’s definitely not PC.,” but he also acknowledged that keeping the nickname may “not necessarily be a bad thing.”

It can work “as long as you’re being respectful about things,” he said. “You don’t see anyone up in arms about the Fighting Irish.”

Libby said Native American mascots and logos that are historically accurate can be viewed as a source of pride.

“There are some very tastefully done emblems,” he said, citing the Florida State Seminoles and Chicago Blackhawks as positive examples.

(On the flip side, he was offended by a cartoonish logo that was once used by the Cleveland Indians.)

Libby said it is not his place to decide the Redmen debate; it should be up to the community and the Native American residents who live in Tewksbury.

“Ultimately the people of that town have to live with their decision,” he said.



Sophomore Colin McNaught wore a Tewksbury Redmen sweat shirt in September.

Objections to the Redmen name were aired at a School Committee meeting in December.

Direct Link: <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2016/01/18/tewksbury-redmen-more-high-school-mascot-for-debate/C0oCYtIV2SeXDoZRSyp5UO/story.html>

January 19, 2016, 08:00 am

Congressional attention to tribal issues will drive economic growth in Indian country

By Dan Mahoney

2016 marks the fifth year the U.S. Chamber of Commerce will advocate on issues specifically important to our tribal members. At the direction of its Native American Enterprise Initiative (NAEI) Leadership Council – composed of tribes, tribal corporations and Alaskan Native Corporations (ANCs) – the Chamber has scored significant victories in that short time, notably calling attention to the contract support cost payment shortfalls to ANCs and tribes that spanned decades, as well as the General Welfare Exclusion Act that was enacted in 2014.

The NAEI's overall mission is simple: to support economic development in Indian country. The legislation NAEI supports to that end is clear-cut, seeking to help tribal governments provide jobs and opportunities for their members. Many solutions to these tribal economic problems already exist – and have for some time – in legislation that often enjoys bipartisan support in Congress.

One of these solutions is a legislative Carcieri fix, which would solve the problem created by the Supreme Court in 2009 when it interpreted language in the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 that essentially created two classes of tribes regarding the Department of Interior taking land into trust: those recognized before 1934, and those recognized after 1934. As a result, the trust status of much Indian land across the country is in question, leading to needless litigation and hampering economic growth that impacts the ability of tribes to provide for their constituencies.

Another proposal is the Tribal Labor Sovereignty Act, which passed the House this past November with bipartisan support. This bill would amend the National Labor Relations Act to treat tribes and their enterprises operating on tribal lands the same way local, state and

federal governments are treated – providing certainty and clarity to ensure tribal labor governmental statutes would remain intact.

Additionally, legislation to peel back outdated and uneconomic laws and regulations regarding Indian energy is pending in both chambers of Congress. Both bills have merits that would empower tribes to take greater levels of responsibility in developing their energy resources. A compromise incorporating provisions of these bills is not out of reach.

Lastly, one of the simplest solutions is a Native American Housing and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA) reauthorization. With Congress already appropriating the monies to provide housing in Indian country, and bipartisan and bicameral support for a reauthorization streamlining regulatory processes to therefore create more efficient expending of revenue, this important legislation must see its way to the president's desk.

These solutions deserve consideration for countless reasons; but broadly, investment and economic development in Indian Country is investment in the American economy. Attention must be continuously drawn to this fact. As an example, the Chamber proudly supports the efforts of Arctic Slope Regional Corporation – a founding member of the NAEI – in its partnership with Quintillion to bring subsea fiber optic broadband capacity to coastal Alaska. Their investment is forward thinking and purely accomplished through private investment dollars. The line will improve living conditions in one of the most remote regions of the country, increase competition, provide more reliable service, and strengthen America's national security and strategic telecommunications position in the Arctic. Improved capacity will open the doors for quality investment opportunities and economic development initiatives, pursuits embodying the Chamber's mission.

Often it is difficult to reach critical mass on tribal issues in Congress. This reality was a driving force behind the creation of NAEI in 2012. However, the Chamber is confident the will exists in Congress during the early months of 2016 to find agreement on these issues, thereby helping facilitate economic growth in Indian country.

Mahoney is the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's director for the Native American Enterprise Initiative.

Direct Link: <http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/civil-rights/266247-congressional-attention-to-tribal-issues-will-drive-economic>

Grant to fund local indigenous artists

Max B. O'Connell Journal staff

Jan 19, 2016

The "starving artists" maxim is often true, but three local Native American artists will now have a little extra money to help them pursue their artistic passions.

First Peoples Fund, a nonprofit that supports indigenous artists across the country, has awarded 27 grants in the new year, with three awarded to Black Hills artists.

Rapid City beadwork artist Molina Parker, an Oglala Lakota, has received a \$5,000 business entrepreneurial grant, while Rapid City flutist Darren Thompson, an Ojibwe, has won a \$10,000 business entrepreneurial grant. Kyle-based stone sculptor and wood carving artist Brendon Albers, of the Cheyenne River Sioux tribe, has won a \$5,000 cultural preservation grant and fellowship.

"What's great about these grants is that they're artists who are mid-career with strong projects," said Jessica Miller, program manager of First Peoples Fund. "We're able to help them take their work to the next level, aid them with marketing, and really help them find financial independence."

Miller said that the business entrepreneurial grants have worked well before, as Albers is a previous winner who was able to purchase better carving tools for his work and find a studio space. He'll use his grant this year to hold workshops on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation to teach young people classic stone and wood carving skills.

"We just play a small role for them," Miller said. "They take the initiative, and we provide what assistance we can."

Thompson said that he learned of the award just prior to the Christmas holiday.

"It's been challenging waiting for them to officially make the announcement," Thompson said. "I submitted back in August, so this has been a half-year in the making."

Thompson, who manages his own career, said that his proposal was to use the grant for marketing.

"Doing outreach and sending materials can be costly, so the grant is going to offset sharing and distributing costs," Thompson said. "Word-to-word and in-person stuff always works, but I can't be everywhere all the time, so this will expand my reach to new organizations."

Thompson has already started setting up meetings with media ahead of time and updating equipment.

"My computer was on its last leg, so that's one of the things this is funding," Thompson said. "I can update how I manage invoices and my inventory, and I can publish more albums so they're better available."

Thompson said that album pressings were particularly prohibitive, as CDs cost \$4 or \$5 per unit in smaller orders.

"Now I can get a larger quantity to keep costs down and profit up," said Thompson, who is also working on new musical material.

Parker said that she had her own challenges as an artist and a stay-at-home mother, which kept her from having the money to create larger works of art that she could enter in art shows.

"This is going to enable me to buy the supplies I need that I normally couldn't afford: antique beads, tanned leather, rawhide that's been treated properly," Parker said. "That stuff tends to be fairly expensive, so this will give me the financial freedom I need to spend it on larger pieces."

That newfound freedom is particularly encouraging to Parker, who only learned she had won two weeks ago after initially expecting news by Thanksgiving.

"I figured I didn't get it, and thought, 'Well, that's OK, a record amount of people applied,'" Parker said. "When they called me, I was in shock, my face went numb, I got on the phone with my husband and just started screaming."

Parker has already sketched out new works, including a fully beaded purse, a beaded vest that fellow grantee Thompson had asked for, and beaded portrait that is a memorial to her grandmother. She also plans to improve her website to more professionally market herself.

Both Parker and Thompson said that they felt honored to be a part of the First Peoples Fund's artists.

"It's difficult to push forward, but I hope people see this and realize that if they keep following their dreams, it makes a difference," Thompson said.

"The 'starving artist' thing is true," Parker said. "It's hard to make money off of your work unless you have the tools and someone buying on a regular basis. So this does a lot of the promotion that needs to be done."

Direct Link: http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/grant-to-fund-local-indigenous-artists/article_dc663706-bf23-5093-944a-4075bb0ae9bb.html

UM professor helping to launch indigenous language center

KEILA SZPALLER keila.szpaller@missoulain.com

Updated Jan 18, 2016

Imagine learning social studies in the Salish language.

Or in Lakota.

Or learning math in a totally different tongue.

Rosalyn La Pier, assistant professor at the University of Montana, said people in China do just that every day.

“They all learn math in Chinese,” said La Pier, who speaks some Blackfeet. “We do not need the English language to learn math and science.”

On Tuesday, La Pier heads to Hilo, Hawaii, to attend a symposium on opening an international center on native language preservation and advancement. The working title of the organization is the Global Center on Indigenous Language Excellence, and La Pier is one of 13 people invited to its launch and strategy session.

“The center will be a gathering place – both physical and virtual – not only for noted experts in a wide range of indigenous issues, all of whom are grounded in a strong fluency in their native languages, but the center will also place a particular emphasis on including, attracting and grooming new generations of such experts,” Namaka Rawlins, a symposium host and executive director of Aha Punana Leo in Hawaii, noted in an email to invitees about the project.

La Pier is participating in the effort because of her history of support for native languages. She worked at the Piegan Institute, which has a mission to revitalize the Blackfeet language, for 15 years up until 2014, and she advocates for state and federal legislation that supports Native American languages.

One issue repeatedly comes up in her advocacy work, especially in Washington, D.C.. On several visits last year to the nation's capital, for instance, policymakers wanted to know that learning a native language is beneficial, and not harmful, to a student, she said.

Montana is home to 12 tribes on seven reservations, and an estimated 10 native languages.

“One of the questions people always have is, ‘What is the data that shows learning a second language is useful to a student?’ ” she said.

Research shows that learning a foreign language, such as French or Spanish, increases a person's cognitive abilities, she said. However, she said there's little research that shows the same for Native American languages, and the center aims to produce that body of work.

“One of the things we want to do with the global center is to create more, again, scientific-based research that proves that learning a second language, learning a native language, is not going to inhibit a child's ability to be educated,” she said.

The center is a project of the Aha Punana Leo, a center focused on the Hawaiian language, and the Hawaiian Language College, and it is receiving grant money from the Talampias Trust. The University of Hawaii is a symposium host as well.

One of the main challenges for people working on native languages is they operate in isolation, La Pier said. Researchers in New Zealand and Ireland have done groundbreaking work on language revitalization, and the center will help preservationists elsewhere replicate their methods instead of reinventing the wheel.

In particular, La Pier is interested in developing ways of teaching subject matters in native languages.

“If it works in Cherokee, let’s see if it will work in Blackfeet. If it works in Lakota, let’s see if it can work in Crow,” La Pier said.

She herself speaks some Blackfeet, but she isn’t fluent. When she worked for the Piegan Institute, one elder in particular never spoke to her in English.

“He’d always start by saying, ‘You should be speaking Blackfeet. Your grandmother speaks. So should you,’ ” she said.

If the advocates who launch the center have their way, the next generation of grandmas may be even more adept at their native tongue.

Direct Link: http://missoulian.com/news/local/um-assistant-professor-heads-to-symposium-to-launch-indigenous-language/article_44e0c399-f2c7-558c-a50f-36272c582980.html

Activists fear missing Native American women were swept up in oil-worker sex-trafficking ring

Mary Papenfuss
International Business Times
20 January 2016



North Dakota Energy Sector

Native American women are being murdered and vanishing in the US Midwest, and activists have complained that local police don't much

care. They fear that the women are disappearing and being pushed into sex-trafficking rings to satisfy oil workers in North Dakota.

Three Native American women have been killed and two more have disappeared from northern Minnesota since May 2015 in a period of around six months in the sparsely populated region. A third woman was kidnapped but managed to escape.

"I think a lot of disappearances of young women can be tracked back to some sort of trafficking," activist Patti Larsen told [The Guardian](#). Larsen is a member of [Mending the Sacred Hoop](#), an organisation that works on bringing an end to violence against Indian women.

"There's a connection" between reservations and low-income areas of local towns and "trafficking and prostitution routes", noted sex-trafficking researcher Chris Stark. Native teenage girls are being recruited or groomed, he said, for the Bakken, an area of oil-rich fields in North Dakota, where tens of thousands of men have worked the last few years.

Native American women and girls tend to be easy targets for traffickers who seek to recruit for commercial sex work. Native American women are twice as likely to be sexually assaulted as women of other races. A 2007 study found that 24% of the women charged with prostitution in north Minneapolis were Native American, yet they [comprised only 2.2%](#) of the population.

"If you're a trafficker looking for the perfect population of people to violate, Native [American] women would be a prime target," said [Sarah Deer](#), an attorney, author of *The Beginning and End of Rape: Confronting Sexual Violence in Native America*. "You have extreme poverty. You have a people who have been traumatized. And you have a legal system that doesn't step in to stop it."

But law enforcement officials point to criminal gang activity and persistent traffickers driven by profits that make the problem difficult to battle.

"You follow the construction workers, you follow the money, you follow the oil – you'll start seeing where the trafficking will follow that," said Duluth police officer Kim Wick.

The town's international port on Lake Superior has served as a hub for commercial sex for decades, and it capitalises on the proximity of low-income Native women from surrounding reservations. Stark called it a "built-in pool of women" that was particularly vulnerable to criminals.

Direct Link: <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/activists-fear-missing-native-american-095016198.html>

1/19/2016 3:32pm PST

Armed right-wing militia may not be the best caretakers of Native American artifacts

By [Aura Bogado](#) on 19 Jan 2016

When those armed ranchers took over the headquarters buildings of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, they found something else on their hands: about 4,000 artifacts from the Burns Paiute Tribe's ancestors. Thanks to that situation, we've learned that they have some pretty wild ideas about the history of whiteness, cattle, and Native Americans.

The [AP](#) got the story:

Thousands of archaeological artifacts — and maps detailing where more can be found — are kept inside the national wildlife refuge buildings currently being held by an armed group of protestors angry over federal land policy.

Ryan Bundy, one of the leaders of the group occupying the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in southeastern Oregon, says they have no real interest in the antiquities. Still, their access to the artifacts and maps has some worried that looters could take advantage of the situation.

As a result, the Burns Paiute tribe's chair, Charlotte Rodrique, told AP that the Bundys are holding her people's history hostage. She's got a serious point: The maps indicate secret locations like burial grounds and stone writings; some of the artifacts, which include stone tools and woven baskets, are close to 10,000 years old; and they're also evidence of the tribe's pre-colonial presence.

Since the artifacts and maps are protected by federal law, the tribe has asked the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to prosecute the armed group if anything is damaged or goes missing. We'll see how that goes. [The group is mad](#) that they can't do whatever they want to do on federal land ... And yet, for all of 2016 so far, they've been able to do whatever they want on federal land.

Ryan Bundy told the AP that “If the Native Americans want [the artifacts], then we’d be delighted to give them to them.” Rodrique said she’s not going to validate the Bundys by entering into discussion with them.

Also, it sounds plain ridiculous to have a group of armed white people handling cultural and archeological treasures that they don’t understand. This refuge has been looted for at least the last 40 years; for the tribe to hand the occupiers an inventory of thousands of artifacts would not only take an incredible amount of time, it might help the Bundys and their allies should they decide to do any looting themselves. (They’ve already done a number on the government files they’ve gotten their hands on.)

Each time the Bundys say anything about the Native American artifacts at Malheur, they reveal new levels of ignorance — even about cattle, a subject in which they claim some expertise. Cattle only arrived in the Americas about 500 years ago, along with European colonizers, and didn’t make it to Oregon until about 1840. But Ryan Bundy told the AP that “Before white man came, so to speak, there was nothing to keep cattle from tromping on those things.”

Wow. In one brief sentence, Bundy manages to completely ignore history *and* offend Native Americans. He fails to acknowledge that the cattle tradition he holds so dear is only about 175 years old, while the artifacts that he calls “things” have been around for 10 millennia.

Not that that matters to Bundy, who also told the AP: “We also recognize that the Native Americans had the claim to the land, but they lost that claim,” adding, “There are things to learn from cultures of the past, but the current culture is the most important.”

So ... no. As Rodrique has explained, her people never ceded their land. Bundy can say “current culture” all he wants, but he clearly means “white culture,” and his prejudice speaks for itself.

The Malheur occupiers’ approach to history, just like their approach to the law, is outrageously wrong — but, at least so far, without much consequence. In the meantime, it’s putting the artifacts that help claim the Burns Paiute history into peril.

Direct Link: <http://grist.org/politics/armed-right-wing-militia-may-not-be-the-best-caretakers-of-native-american-artifacts/>

Holocaust Museum May Be Built At Site Where US Army Murdered 300 Native Americans

BY CARIMAH TOWNES  JAN 20, 2016 8:00 AM



A teepee is seen with Wounded Knee Church in the background, at Wounded Knee in the Pine Ridge reservation, S.D., date unknown. Wounded Knee is the site of the massacre of 146 Lakota Sioux men, women and children, by the U.S. Army in 1890. (AP Photo)

One hundred and twenty-five years after hundreds of men, women, and children were executed at Wounded Knee, a former journalist and member of the Lakota tribe is getting ready to buy the adjacent land, with the intention of turning it into a Native American holocaust museum.

The massacre at Wounded Knee was the culmination of building tension between the Sioux Nation and white government officials. In 1890, Lakota Sioux, whose land was stripped away over time, participated in Ghost Dances to restore the lives they led before white settlers took over. But when a government official alerted Washington about the

dances, the U.S. army was sent to quell the tribe. In the end, an estimated 300 people were killed.

The historic land currently belongs to non-native James Czywczynski. But Tim Giago, a member of the Lakota Sioux, recently signed an agreement to purchase it for \$3.9 million.

Born and raised on the Pine Ridge Reservation in Wounded Knee, Giago wants the land to be reclaimed by the Sioux Nation. To that effect, on the 125th anniversary of the massacre, Giago announced his intentions to turn the land into a trust for the nine Sioux tribes. He also discussed plans to open a holocaust museum to honor native peoples who were slaughtered over time, including those massacred on his homeland.

The land has not officially been bought, but people have already expressed their interest in Giago's plan. Roughly one month ago, the 81-year-old founded the National Historic Site of Wounded Knee Inc., to collect donations for the final purchase.

When the land is officially in his possession, Giago believes a museum could be educational and economically beneficial for Rapid City, where 16 percent of the general population lives below the poverty line. Economic hardship is an even graver reality for Native Americans there, with 51 percent living in poverty. The Pine Ridge reservation has an unemployment rate of 70 percent.

"People in Germany, France and Italy probably know more about Indian country than people living here in America. Can you imagine a really beautiful Holocaust Museum and a big trade pavilion for Indian artisans and crafts people? They could set up booths year-round and sell their arts and crafts to the tourists," he told Indian Country Today.

"We would have tourists come from all over the world and stay in Rapid City, go to the restaurants and hotels, take buses to Wounded Knee. It would create over 200 jobs for the people down there. It would be also a boost financially to Rapid City, South Dakota."

Giago is not alone in his attempt to reclaim ownership of native lands. Tribes across the country are in the process of procuring land that was divided over generations and undermined their integrity.

Under the Dawes Act of 1887, when a landowner died, ownership was fractioned and transferred to his or her heirs. But the physical land was not actually divided accordingly, so all of the heirs laid claims to the same territory. Over time, single parcels of land were owned by thousands of people, which made ownership of cultural or sacred sites heavily disputed and hard to access.

To remedy the problem, the Department of the Interior launched a massive land buy-back program for tribes across the country, in 2009. Over the span of 10 years, the department will use \$1.9 billion to purchase some of the fractioned land from willing sellers, consolidate it, and turn it into tribal trusts. The overarching goal is to restore tribal sovereignty — meaning sites like Wounded Knee will be given back to natives and used at their discretion.

Direct Link: <http://thinkprogress.org/justice/2016/01/20/3738546/native-americans-may-get-a-holocaust-museum-at-wounded-knee/>

Supreme Court goes after Nebraska over use of Native American lands

By **Danielle Blevins** -

January 20, 2016



Photo: Brandon Kopp via Flickr

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Talk Media News) – The Supreme Court heard arguments in *Nebraska v. Mitch Parker* on Wednesday over the use, rather non-use, of Nebraska land under a late 1800s land grant from Congress.

In the 1870s and 1880s, some of the land was set aside and delegated for use for the Omaha and Winnebago Tribes and was eventually opened up for settlement by non-Native American use and settlement. In 2004, after the local tribe passed alcohol tax laws and regulations, citizens in Pender, Nebraska filed

suit against the tribe saying the land was no longer subject to the tribes' control through de facto diminishment.

Both the district court and the Court of Appeals of the Eighth Circuit found in favor of the tribes. The courts found no congressional intent to diminish the land owned by the tribes.

Justices asked probing questions of Nebraska's Solicitor General James Smith. He argued due to a set of no-longer existing set of train tracks, non-Native Americans settled to the west of the allocated land, but still in the allocated land area of the prior century's congressional acts, and based on that reality, the tribe's land grant was diminished by de facto. Smith argued the tribes lost sovereignty over the jurisdiction.

Paul Clement, arguing for the other side, suggested nothing in the text of land grant authority hinted at Congress' intent to diminish the land in question. Reading from other land grants of authority that had not been found to suggest diminishment, Clement demonstrated for the Court the similarities in the language used.

Arguing for the federal government on the side of the Native American tribes, Assistant Solicitor General Allon Kedem told the Court there was no reason to infer congressional intent to diminish the land grant.

When asked by Justice Sonia Sotomayor what powers would the state lose if the Court decided against it, Smith said those who live there would lose justifiable expectation of government participation due to the introduction of a new sovereign entity. Additionally, Smith pointed out the ambiguity of jurisdictional control in the area. When other members of the Court pointed out the current uncertainty between state and municipalities, Smith arguments seemed to dissipate and hinge on the fact that 98% of the population in the city is non-Native American.

This is the second Native American sovereignty case the Court has heard in the 2015- 2016 term. The prior one has yet to be decided. Both cases should be decided by June 2016.

Direct Link: <http://www.talkmedianews.com/us-news/2016/01/20/supreme-court-goes-after-nebraska-over-use-of-native-american-lands/>

The Reclaiming of Native American Fashion

A new generation of designers gains visibility in an industry that's misappropriated its culture for decades

CHAVIE LIEBER Jan 21, 2016, 10:00a

Bethany Yellowtail incorporates Cheyenne mountain and river designs into her beaded collars. Photo: B.Yellowtail

We are smack dab in the middle of a Native fashion renaissance," proclaims Karen Kramer, the Peabody Essex Museum's curator of Native American art and culture. "Native fashion increasingly permeates everyday life — across the internet, in stores, skate parks, runways, pretty much everywhere you go. Native Americans have always used clothing and personal adornment as key means for artistic expression and cultural survival. Today's Native designers are expanding on this creation, breaking creative boundaries left and right."

Kramer is delivering remarks at the press preview for "**Native Fashion Now**," the country's first major exhibit to showcase contemporary Native American fashion, on a chilly fall evening in Salem, Massachusetts. "Native Fashion Now" is in Salem until early March, after which it will travel to the Philbrook Museum of Art in Tulsa, the Portland Art Museum in Oregon, and the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in New York City. The exhibit features

nearly 100 pieces of clothing and accessories made by 75 different Native American designers from the US and Canada.

The designers' styles vary widely, as do their backgrounds. You'll find an elegant evening gown by Dorothy Grant made of silk and tulle with red and black Kaigani Haida eagles printed on the skirt, and also a spandex bodycon dress by Whitefish Lake First Nation designer Derek Jagodzinsky that has Cree syllabics emblazoned on an accompanying belt. There's a woven wool tunic with fringe from Navajo designer D.Y. Begay; a bondage necklace made of Tahitian pearls and stainless steel from Pat Pruitt of the Laguna Pueblo tribe; and Christian Louboutin boots covered in antique beads from Jamie Okuma, a designer of Luiseño and Shoshone-Bannock descent.



"Native Fashion Now" presents the work of 75 Native American and Canadian designers. Photo: Kathy Tarantola/Peabody Essex Museum

While some pieces look explicitly Native American ("made with handed-down Native techniques used for countless generations," says Kramer),

others are more subtle in their interpretations. There's a tunic dress with an abstract pattern that vaguely resembles a totem pole made by Alano Edzerza, a member of the Raven clan of the Tahltan Nation; a floral lace dress trimmed with replica elk teeth from Crow and Northern Cheyenne designer Bethany Yellowtail; and a black clutch made of shiny calfskin leather with Seminole patchwork by Chickasaw, Creek, and Choctaw designer Maya Stewart.

"This is about celebrating the diverse, creative expressions of a very dynamic, living set of Native cultures through the lens of fashion," Kramer tells me at a cocktail reception before the preview. "It will help people shake off preconceived notions of what Native American fashion is and what Native style is."

The idea for the exhibit came to Kramer a few years ago when she traveled to Santa Fe, as she does every year, for the annual **Indian Market**, the largest Native American arts and crafts fair in the country. "People are finally interested in our individual voices, and our voices are part of a new language that you didn't ever hear before. Because previously, we were being stomped on."

"I just started noticing that there was more and more emphasis on contemporary Native fashion designers and jewelers, and that they were pushing conventions," she says. "I've been seeing a really young, vibrant community emerging — designers who are creating haute couture and unique, one-of-a-kind ensembles, as well as an upswing of streetwear. It's really a burgeoning community."

Several Native fashion designers who have pieces in the "Native Fashion Now" exhibit are present at the preview and make their way through the exhibit. Many get emotional when reflecting on how much they've had to go through to achieve this kind of recognition.

"People are finally interested in our individual voices, and our voices are part of a new language that you didn't ever hear before," says Patricia Michaels, the Taos Pueblo designer behind **PM Waterlily** who arguably became Native fashion's most well-known face after starring on *Project Runway* in 2013. "Because previously, we were being stomped on."

The Native fashion community is not new, though the buzz surrounding it is.

"We've always been here, but the internet has helped us get much more of a response," says designer **Jamie Okuma**. "Social media has really changed the landscape. You can be your own PR person and get visibility just by posting."

Okuma is one of countless Native American designers creating clothing and jewelry that draw inspiration and use designs from their tribes. While some have attended fashion school, many aren't professionally trained. Making clothes is simply a part of Native culture.

"A lot of Native Americans learn crafts from a very young age," says Jolonzo Goldtooth, the 28-year-old Navajo designer behind **JG Indie**. Living on his family's ranch on the Navajo's Huerfano Chapter in New Mexico, Goldtooth earns his income mainly by making traditional garb for his tribe, but he also takes personal orders for his contemporary line. "My grandmothers are seamstresses, so that's how I learned to sew, bead, and put garments together. We've always made our own clothing."



del wears a Lloyd Kiva New dress from the exhibit. Photo: Kelly Capelli/Peabody Essex Museum

"I've been making clothes since I was five. Designing is in my blood," echoes **Sho Sho Esquiro**, a designer from a small Athabaskan tribe in the Yukon called Kaska Dena. "I grew up very old-school, where I cross-

country skied to school and ate whatever we shot. Since my tribe is inland, we were always moving around and didn't have time to create crafts like baskets and quillwork like other tribes in the Northwest. So instead, we adorned our clothing like artwork. My people have been doing this for thousands of years. Clothing is so important to us that when someone in my tribe is cremated, we wear our finest clothes."

Many consider the late Lloyd Kiva New the founding father of contemporary Native American fashion. The techniques and skills that designers like Esquiro and Goldtooth were taught by their families used to be kept exclusively inside tribes. New, a Cherokee from Oklahoma, was the first Native designer to sell clothes outside of the Native community.

New opened a boutique to sell his own Cherokee-inspired clothing in Scottsdale, Arizona all the way back in 1945, and his high-end line Kiva was sold at stores like Neiman Marcus and Lord & Taylor. In 1962, New went on to co-found the [Institute of American Indian Arts](#) in Santa Fe, where he taught scores of Native designers.



A cape, dress, and headdress by Orlando Dugi. Photo: Thosh Collins/Peabody Essex Museum

"Before New, there were Native women in the 1930s who were combining traditional design with modern fashion, but they weren't actually calling themselves 'designers,'" says Jessica Metcalfe, a Turtle Mountain Chippewa who is a professor of Native American studies and the founder of the [Beyond Buckskin](#) blog. "He put Native fashion on the

map and made Santa Fe the mecca for Native fashion. He helped create a huge wave of designers well into the '90s."

New paved the way for Native talents like Marcus Amerman, Jerry Ingram, and Orlando Dugi, as well as Virgil Ortiz, who worked with Donna Karan to design a Pueblo-inspired collection after Karan met Ortiz at the Sante Fe Indian Market in 2002.

Today, most Native designers sell their wares online, either on Etsy or through their own websites, rather than trying to get into the doors of big department stores or retail chains. This isn't just a matter of bypassing corporate bureaucracy nor is it reflective of their ability to actually get picked up by these stores. Many Native designers see their work as wholly unique, and while they are keen on making a profit, they aren't looking to scale up.

"We're not into mass-producing," explains Michaels. "There are thousands of mass producers out there. We are individuals."

"The pieces I make are special, handmade, and take like 300 hours to make," adds Esquiro, who has an evening gown constructed out of beaver tails, seal and carp skin, and rooster feathers in the "Native Fashion Now" exhibit. "Mass production isn't one of my goals. The world of fashion is becoming so disposable and I don't ever want my clothes to contribute to that. I don't want to leave that kind of carbon footprint."

Beyond Buckskin's [online boutique](#), which Metcalfe added to her site in 2012, saw unprecedented sales this past holiday season. In fact, she says business has grown exponentially over the last three years as the tenants of Native fashion have gone mainstream.

"Movements like local, 'made in the USA,' and ethically-produced are very much of the moment and they bring greater recognition to Native Americans because these are all standards we've always produced under," she says. "The artists I work with think of their clothing completely different than Western manufacturers. Of course, they want to make it big and have a big impact, but they are thinking of social impact, not about fame or economical domination. They want to bring more opportunity to Native people."



ca elk teeth trim this B.Yellowtail design on display at the Peabody Essex Museum. Photo: Chavie Lieber/Racked

As the *New York Times* wrote in a 2002 obituary, New's impact lay in his "broad humanistic approach to the arts, stressing creative links to the traditional arts but urging students not to be bound by them and to reject stereotypical notions of American Indian art and culture." Despite New's influence, Native designers today say one of the main obstacles they face is stereotyping.

"Anthropologists were collecting feathers off of bare-breasted woman on a canoe and then their bravery was applauded," says Michaels. "People insisted on what Natives looked like: a woman sitting on a buffalo rug with the wind blowing in her hair. There was all this stuff that we were expected to reproduce as contemporary Native American designers, and if we tried something new, we were told, 'Oh, who do you think you are? That's not Native enough.' I've been hearing that my stuff wasn't Native enough since I was 18, and meanwhile, in our cultures, everyone is celebrated specifically for individuality."

Metcalf largely attributes stereotypes surrounding the Native American aesthetic to the work of Fred Harvey, who opened restaurants and hotels with shops featuring Native artwork and souvenirs along railroads in the early 1900s. Harvey built outposts every 100 miles through California, New Mexico, and Arizona on the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway.

"I've been hearing that my stuff wasn't Native enough since I was 18, and meanwhile, in our cultures, everyone is celebrated specifically for individuality."

"Harvey had good intentions to preserve Native culture because there was tons of assimilation at the time and a lot of the pottery and weaving techniques weren't being practiced anymore," says Metcalfe. "But he also saw a potential for economic development because there was a clear market of white people wanting Native goods."

The English-born Harvey is credited with establishing American tourism in the Southwest during the turn of the 20th century, but Metcalfe says that though Harvey "pushed for the preservation of Native culture, the rest of the world became accustomed to the idea that there was one type of Native design."

These stereotypes have lingered up through today. While Kramer notes Native fashion goes "far beyond expectations of buckskin, feathers, and fringe," designers are often faced with pushback. "People look at my work and say, 'Oh, that's so non-traditional. Where's all the turquoise and silver?'" says **Kristen Dorsey**, a 29-year-old jewelry designer based in Los Angeles.

Dorsey is from the Chickasaw tribe of the Southeastern Woodlands. She makes much of her jewelry using repoussé, a type of relief work popular in Native art in which copper is hammered and then hand-carved. Sitting inside the Peabody Essex gallery after the press preview, Dorsey is decked out in pieces from her latest collection; it's called "Panther Woman" and is inspired by a character from Chickasaw oral tradition that helped the tribe chase conquistador Hernando de Soto away from the Mississippi territories.

"I often have to go into Southeastern history 101. With each interaction with a potential client, I think, 'How do I educate you on thousands of years of the history of a region in a sound bite?'" she says. "There's so much understanding that needs to happen about the individuality of Native culture and how innovation and self-expression is a tradition for us. We don't make the same thing over and over again. Culture does not exist in a box. It is constantly transforming based on what materials you have access to, what people you interact with. It's constantly changing."



Kristen Dorsey makes her jewelry using traditional Native techniques. Photo: Chiara Salomoni/Kristen Dorsey

While Native designers often take inspiration from their tribes, it's unfair to assume that everything they make needs to be rooted in Native culture, says Laguna Pueblo jewelry designer **Pat Pruitt**.

"We can choose whether or not to represent our culture," he says. "I don't want to present this false façade that there's a story behind it. I don't rely on that as an artist. Because sometimes there's not, sometimes it's just fucking cool! If I happen to use my culture, by all means I've been blessed, but I don't want individuals to be fooled in the sense that this is *only* where Native Americans get their inspiration. Because it's not. We don't rely on, 'What does this mean?' But if it has nothing to do with my culture, people tell me it's not Native enough. Can't the necklace just be cool?"

Pointing to how some publications have covered the "Native Fashion Now" exhibit, Dorsey says that "reporters and many museum patrons focused their questions on my racial background — how much 'Indian blood' I have — rather than focusing on me as a designer and jeweler."

You can't talk about Native American fashion without discussing cultural appropriation. Native designs have been stolen and repackaged by corporate fashion brands for decades, and the problem is rampant on both the high and low ends.

Native designs have been stolen and repackaged by corporate fashion brands for decades, and the problem is rampant on both the high and low ends.

In 2011, **Urban Outfitters** sold underwear, earrings, flasks, socks, and tunics it labeled "Navajo." **Forever 21** sold items labeled as Navajo that

year as well. These items weren't decorated with traditional Navajo patterns nor were they in any way related to the Navajo tribe; instead, Urban and Forever 21 merely slapped the Navajo name on generic, Native-looking designs for effect. Urban eventually subbed the word "Navajo" for "patterned."

The next year, Asos debuted its "Go Native" line, which featured pieces it erroneously described as Navajo and Aztec. Jeremy Scott designed a collection for Adidas in 2013 that featured tracksuits and dresses covered in totem pole designs. This past March, DSquared2 presented a collection it called "an ode to America's native tribes meets the noble spirit of Old Europe" at Milan Fashion Week. Designer Isabel Marant was accused of copying a design from the Mixe people of Oaxaca, Mexico over the summer; Marant is actually trying to claim rights to the design, a move that would force the Mixe to shell out money to sell their own work.

The misappropriation of Native headdresses is particularly prevalent. In 2014, for *Germany's Next Top Model*, Heidi Klum had contestants fly to Utah to model as indigenous people, complete with face paint, teepees, and yes, headdresses. Pharrell wore a feather headdress on the cover of *Elle UK*, as did Karlie Kloss in a Victoria's Secret fashion show. H&M was caught selling \$15 headdresses in Canada. Headdresses were also seen on the runway at Chanel's Métiers d'Art show in Dallas.

"Native headdresses are not fashion — they are very sacred to us," says Esquiro. "Really only men wore them, and if a woman did, she was a chief. And a chief would have had to have earned each and every of those feathers, so when you see someone at a Chanel fashion show wearing one of them, I think it's disrespectful and in bad taste."



A headdress on the Chanel runway. Photo: Cooper Neill/Getty Images

Cultural appropriation is certainly not unique to the Native American community nor the fashion industry, but the frequency with which fashion appropriates Native culture leaves experts baffled.

"It's about the intersection of aesthetic and spirituality," posits Denise Green, a professor in Cornell's American Indian and Indigenous Studies Program, who also oversees the school's Costume and Textile Collection. "The designs involve beliefs about the world and why we are here. There are very spiritual inclinations that get articulated and you can feel it in your heart. That creates something very compelling visually, and that's why it keeps getting ripped off. This is very intelligent, highly developed, good design which has been negotiated since time immemorial."

Some believe the problem is a lack of education. If designers, editors, and other people in the mainstream fashion world knew, for example, that headdresses were sacred items worn only by tribal leaders, would they use them as they do?

"There's so much that's misunderstood," says Dorsey. "I think fashion can be this accessible medium and a way that we can educate the public and help them better understand our communities and be better members of their own communities. The fashion world really needs a dose of that."

The Peabody Essex Museum's Kramer agrees. "We need to help people understand that there is 500-plus years of colonization at play," she says. "These motifs and symbols might look at face value just like motifs and symbols, but it's become an exercise in dominant culture versus marginalized culture. And this is happening under the radar: you might not even realize this when you're buying that Forever 21 Navajo-inspired T-shirt."

"Ultimately, this is about people coming in and saying, 'This is mine now,'" says Green. "It's about the ongoing process of colonization, a take-take-take mentality, whether that's taking people's lands, their homes, or now their designs. We live in an ongoing colonial world, where that mentality of taking without asking permission or without giving fair compensation still lingers. I'd like to think that mentality is going away, but the fashion industry is evidence that this entitlement is alive and well."

"It's about the ongoing process of colonization, a take-take-take mentality, whether that's taking people's lands, their homes, or now their designs."

There's little Native tribes can do when their designs, symbols, or names are used without permission. In 1990, the US government strengthened the **Indian Arts and Crafts Act** of 1935, which prohibits

"misrepresentation in marketing of Indian arts and crafts products within the United States." The act makes it "illegal to offer or display for sale, or sell any art or craft product in a manner that falsely suggests it is Indian produced, an Indian product, or the product of a particular Indian or Indian Tribe or Indian arts and crafts organization, resident within the United States."

There are now constant busts relating to counterfeit Native items being sold in the United States. Last fall, the federal government arrested several New Mexican store owners for **passing off Filipino-made crafts as Native**; if convicted, they could face up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. However, it's far more difficult to protect tribes whose designs are copied or names misappropriated. As far as design-stealing goes, fashion is **not protected** under federal law.

"The laws are not set up to protect individuals or collective design," says Adrienne Keene, a Cherokee who received a doctorate in education from Harvard and is now a postdoctoral fellow of Native American studies at Brown. She runs the popular watchdog blog **Native Appropriations**.

"The big problem is that there are no legal consequences. So if a designer steals something, they might get slammed in a few blog posts,

but nothing will happen to them so until there's someone to actually report instances to, I don't think the tide will shift."

In 2012, the Navajo Nation **filed a lawsuit** against Urban Outfitters for the brand's use of the tribe's name. Just three weeks ago, a judge **ruled** that the group has legal standing and can continue to pursue the suit. The case is unique, though; the Navajo trademarked its name in 1943. Most tribes cannot do this.



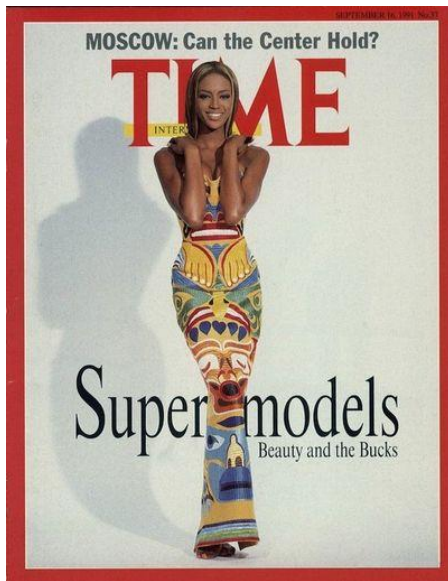
The finale at Dsquared2's "Native-meets-Europe" show. Photo: Victor Boyko/Getty Images

"In the case of my own community, 'Cherokee' has been used and misused so many times that I'm nearly certain the trademark office would not grant trademark protection to the community at this point, as they would argue it is a 'generic' term, not specific," says Keene. "There are several nations I can imagine this happening to as well. Then there is the complication of tribal names themselves. Who would get to hold the trademark for 'Lakota' and be responsible for its enforcement, for example? There are many bands of Lakota, each with their own tribal enrollments, governments, and resources."

Native American insignia, emblems, and symbols can be trademarked, but Metcalfe says a designer could face serious backlash if they went this route, since Native symbols belong to the tribe as a whole: "It makes it hard for one entity to claim it without screwing over our relatives from other bands. Symbols belong to the community and they need to be handled delicately."

At the end of the day, it all boils down to: is it worth it? "Going after someone is a huge drain of resources, money, and time," says Keene, "and as we've seen with plenty of non-Native designers, most people are largely unsuccessful."

When it comes to appropriation, there are indeed some shades of gray, says Kramer — which is why her exhibit includes three pieces by non-Native designers. One is an Isaac Mizrahi totem pole dress from 1991. Kramer believes it's a piece that allows us to "discuss such a complex issue because totem poles are very specific to Northwest family history and while Isaac doesn't replicate them completely, he riffs on them."



Naomi Campbell in the Isaac Mizrahi totem dress on the cover of *Time*. Photo: Time

If the dress were to hit stores today, people would be up in arms about Mizrahi's "riffing," just as they were about Jeremy Scott's totem pole designs for Adidas. But, Kramer notes, when Naomi Campbell wore the piece on the *cover of Time*, Michaels "saw a part of herself in this dress, accepted by mainstream America. She saw Native American culture accepted by mainstream fashion and for her, it opened the doors into the fashion world and it gave her inspiration to become a designer."

Where is the line drawn? Is there ever an appropriate way for non-Native people to draw inspiration from Native culture? Native American designers and academics agree it's important to make sure the Native community is benefiting in some real, tangible manner whenever its culture is invoked.

Kim TallBear, an associate professor of Native studies at the University of Alberta, says, at minimum, "something must be returned to the Native community. If you want to use a Native resource or design, you better be giving back to them in some way or another because you are taking what is not yours."

"Part of the trouble is that some Native American communities are very impoverished," says Green. "At the same time, you have huge amounts of money being made by people appropriating what's theirs."

Green cites Ralph Lauren, which **knocked off** Cowichan knits — and labeled them as Cowichan without any involvement from the tribe — just a year after it **put out** a catalog full of sepia-toned images featuring Native Americans as veritable props. "What Ralph Lauren could have done was to ask Cowichan women to knit those sweaters and to compensate them fairly," she says. "Then they could have called the sweaters Cowichan and they would have been! There are plenty of Cowichan women who knit for a living. They should have worked with them."

She points to a brand like Pendleton, which has been supplying Native Americans with blankets and garments for **over 100 years**. The brand has maintained a reciprocal relationship with Native tribes by trading with them and involving them in the design process.



d-painted buffalo corset from Dallin Maybee and Laura Shepherd in "Native Fashion Now." Photo: Chavie Lieber/Racked

Other brands seem to be moving in the right direction. In June, designers Maria Grazia Chiuri and Pierpaolo Piccioli worked with

Canadian Métis artist Christi Belcourt to produce nine looks for Valentino's most recent **resort collection**. Belcourt's work reflects the intricate floral beadwork Métis women are known for and she **said** Valentino went through painstaking efforts to accurately replicate the patterns from her painting "**Water Song**" that hangs in Canada's National Gallery.

The collection was met with plenty of praise, from both Belcourt (who said it was "refreshing" to "work with designers who respect the artist's work so highly") and sites like Bustle (which **wrote** that the collection proves "you can create a Native American-inspired collection the right, respectful way").

Green isn't entirely convinced though. Only a few months after its work with Belcourt, Valentino debuted a spring 2016 collection with what the show notes called a "wild, tribal African" theme and mostly white models **wearing cornrows**. While the Valentino designers **told Vanessa Friedman** of the *New York Times* that they were thinking about Africa and the need to "understand other cultures, not to colonize them," the pair did not work with African artisans.

Then there's the fact that Bethany Yellowtail of **B.Yellowtail** says her non-Native customers often ask if they're "allowed" to wear her clothing: "All the conversations about cultural appropriation have almost made people afraid of exploring our brands. It's generated all this negative discussion about our fashion."

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Designers like Michaels note this is precisely why it's so important for Native Americans to continue producing Native fashion themselves, or to work directly with brands trying to make Native-inspired clothing. There are over 600 Native American tribes that are federally recognized in the US and Canada, and each one has different standards for what kinds of designs can be to be shared publicly and sold. Those within the communities know what is and isn't acceptable for mass consumption.

"Everything that is used in our ceremonies belongs to our village at large and can't be used, but I'm the one that actually knows that," says Michaels. "I spend a painstaking amount of time to make sure I am not selling what belongs to our village. I know that it doesn't belong to me, I respect the people."

"We are constantly thinking about maintaining our cultural identity," echoes Yellowtail. "I know I can't just replicate any designs I see, I know who it belongs to, and I know the story behind them."

For all the harm the copying of designs and misuse of tribal names has caused, it's also helped push Native fashion into the spotlight. Outrage leads to consumer education, and people are becoming far more sensitive to misappropriation.

"It's become a real point of conversation and I think that's a good thing," says Keene. "It's given people the vocabulary to talk about why it's wrong and hurtful, and empowered them to speak against it. In the past five years since I've been writing my blog, I've seen a significant shift in the way the public engages with Native designs. Now they say, 'Buy this, don't buy this,' and that makes me really optimistic."

All the attention has helped also inspired many within Native communities to begin ventures of their own. "There's definitely been an upsurge of young Native Americans venturing into the contemporary fashion world," says TallBear.

"People want an alternative," adds Green. "For so long there was no acknowledgement of what was going on because this has been happening in fashion for decades. But now, suddenly, people are demanding that Native designers be acknowledged and they are taking to Facebook and other social media outlets to point this out. People feel ethically and morally concerned."



Native Max editor-in-chief Kelly Holmes poses for a photo in her magazine wearing a coat and jewelry by Native designers. Photo: Tara Rose
on/Native Max

Blogs like Keene's Native Appropriations and Metcalfe's Beyond Buckskin have become widely read and are brimming with comments. The community has also seen the launch of *Native Max*, the first Native American fashion magazine. It was started three years ago by Kelly Holmes, a 24-year-old former model from a Lakota reservation in South Dakota. The bimonthly publication profiles Native designers and artists and primarily employs Native models, photographers, and stylists.

"Growing up, I collected a lot of fashion magazines and I always hated that I could never identify with any of the people in them," says Holmes. "None of them ever looked like me and nothing ever represented my culture. This is an opportunity to tell our stories positively, instead of focusing on the usual poverty porn." The magazine was only available for purchase through its own site until now, but will be carried at Native-owned businesses around the country this year.

"It's a form of validation," Metcalfe says of *Native Max*. "We can share our culture now on our terms and people are saying, 'Hey, this is cool, your culture is beautiful.'"

The fact that something like *Native Max* exists is proof Native designers aren't waiting around for the mainstream fashion world to accept them. They're forging their own paths instead. The same goes for what Metcalfe calls a never-ending supply of new, young Native designers to feature on her Beyond Buckskin boutique, and of course the cross-country tour of the "Native Fashion Now" exhibit.

As Holmes puts it, "Our designs have always been in style, and you can go to any mall or retailer to see just how trendy tribal prints are. But now, Native Americans are taking Native fashion back."

Chavie Lieber is *Racked's* features reporter.

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